



Edited by Lotte Jensen

# The Roots of Nationalism

National Identity Formation  
in Early Modern Europe, 1600-1815

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

## The Roots of Nationalism

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*National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe,  
1600-1815*

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Lotte Jensen*

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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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# The Roots of Nationalism

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

*Lotte Jensen*

We may often remark a wonderful mixture of manners and characters in the same nation, speaking the same language, and subject to the same government ... Where the government of a nation is altogether republican, it is apt to beget a peculiar set of manners. Where it is altogether monarchical it is more apt to have the same effect; the imitation of superiors spreading the national manners faster among the people. If the governing part of state consist altogether of merchants, as in Holland, their uniform way of life will fix their character. If it consists chiefly of nobles and landed gentry, like Germany, France, and Spain, the same effect follows. The genius of a particular sect or religion is also apt to mould the manner of a people.<sup>2</sup>

In 1748, the Scottish philosopher David Hume made a clear statement about the origins of national character in his collection of moral and political essays. He argued that the character of a nation depended solely upon socio-political and moral factors. His essay 'Of National Characters' was a fierce attack on the widely held climate theory that attributed the differences between peoples to the influence of the climatological circumstances in which they lived.<sup>3</sup> According to this theory, southern peoples like the Spanish and the Italians were wittier and more inclined to warfare than northern peoples whose mental state was determined by greater humidity. Hume objected to this theory by giving nine examples where it failed. One of his decisive arguments was that even though Spanish, English, French and Dutch people travelled across the entire globe, they were still distinguishable. Instead, Hume foregrounded other elements which defined national character, such as cultural habits, a shared language, a common religion and being subject to the same government.

Hume's essay is part of a long tradition of texts about national stereotypes and character that can be traced back to the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> The way he reflects upon 'nation' and 'national character' reveals that these terms had become ingrained in common speech, but were historically charged and contested. Hume refuted the idea that differences in the manners and customs of people could be related to climatological factors and promoted

the idea of differences in 'national cultures', in other words: the idea that national identity was primarily defined along cultural lines.<sup>5</sup> According to Hume, national identities were mutable and the result of the interaction of various factors. The more language, nation and state coincided, the more coherence there was to be found in terms of cultural manners and habits amongst the people. National identity was a matter of imitating each other's behaviour rather than of climatological influences. Geographical settings mattered only as far as political boundaries were concerned: 'The same national character commonly follows the authority of government to a precise boundary'.<sup>6</sup>

In *The Roots of Nationalism*, we focus on the shaping of such 'national cultures' in Europe between 1600 and 1815. This historiographical demarcation is to be taken in a broad sense: while this volume focuses mainly on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the specific periods that were most significant for creating a sense of nationhood may vary from nation to nation. Some of the contributions mention relevant developments in the late medieval period, while others follow certain developments into the nineteenth century. The aim of this book is twofold: firstly, to explore how different aspects of national identity were articulated in cultural, literary and historiographical source traditions in the premodern era from various European perspectives. Secondly, to contribute to current debates on the historical foundations of nationalism by calling into question the dichotomy that has arisen between 'modernists', who regard the nation as a quintessentially modern political phenomenon, and 'traditionalists', who believe that nations began to take shape long before the advent of modernity. While the modernist paradigm has been dominant, it has been challenged in recent years by a growing number of studies that situate the origins of nationalism and nationhood in earlier times. This book takes issue with the modernist paradigm by stressing the *cultural* continuities between premodern and modern nations. Even if one asserts – as some of the authors in this volume do – that nationalism as a political ideology can be traced back only to the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century, then the cultural expressions of these movements still have their origins in premodern source traditions that were reinvented, revitalised and adapted in the context of the nineteenth-century nationalist movements.

By offering a wide range of contributions, which cover different aspects of early modern national identity formation, such as language, cartography, historiography and literature, this volume seeks to readdress the modernist paradigm. It will do so by discussing premodern national thought from five different perspectives: (I) methodological and theoretical issues, (II) the

genealogy of national identity, (III) negative mirror imaging, (IV) maps, canonisation and language, and (V) nation in the age of revolution. This introduction will follow this structure by first commenting on current scholarly views on the formation of national identities and then confronting these views with the historical source-based research, as it is presented in this book.

## The Modernist Paradigm Contested

The gap between the modernists and traditionalists has its origin in two apparently simple questions: what is a nation? And do nations have navels?<sup>7</sup> Since the 1980s these questions have produced a constant stream of articles and books, and this stream is in no way about to dry up. On the contrary, over the last few years the issues of nationhood, national identity and nationalism have aroused new interest among scholars, not in the least because of the fierce controversies between those who contend that the nation is intrinsically linked with modernity and those who wish to include the premodern era in the field of nationalism studies.

The disputes between the modernists and traditionalists have been extensively charted by the sociologist Anthony Smith, who since the 1990s has worked on defining and refining all possible positions within this debate.<sup>8</sup> While fully acknowledging the great value and comprehensiveness of his work, its success has a reverse side as well: no scholar in the field of nationalism studies can escape the obligation to situate himself within the proposed schemes, which are constructed around a series of oppositions: organic versus voluntarist nationalism, constructivism versus determinism, ethnic versus civic nations, political versus cultural national ties, primordialism versus perennialism, continuous versus recurrent perennialism, antiquity versus modernity, etc. What's more, it has become virtually impossible to write about the subject without reproducing the dichotomy between modernists and traditionalists, in spite of some fierce critical attacks against this, in some respects, false dichotomy.<sup>9</sup> For the sake of clarity, both positions will be reproduced here briefly, albeit with a certain reluctance: every reproduction seems only to affirm rather than question the gap between the two parties.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, repeating these views also enables us to offer an explanation for the persistence of the dichotomy and the predominance of the modernist account.

The foundations of the modernist paradigm were laid down by scholars such as Hans Kohn and Elie Kedourie, who defined nationalism as a political

ideology that emerged in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Their work was given impetus in the 1980s by Ernest Gellner, who, in the same vein, argued that nations, national identity and nationalism were the products of modernity and not the other way around.<sup>12</sup> The work of John Breuilly takes a slightly different angle by focusing on the state as the main driving force behind nationalism, but he is equally clear in stating that nationalism should be considered a purely political and modern phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> Of great influence were works by scholars like Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, whose approaches were more bottom-up than Gellner's, as they included the input of the people by stressing the role of the media and traditions for community-building in modern times. The terms they have coined, 'imagined community' and 'invention of tradition', have had a major impact on the scholarly field.<sup>14</sup>

A cultural perspective to the modernist view has been added by the literary scholar Joep Leerssen, who, inspired by the work of John Hutchinson, Miroslav Hroch and Anne-Marie Thiesse, has mapped out the many different manifestations of 'cultural nationalism' in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> We also note the work of the historian Stefan Berger, who has focused on the nationalisation of history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>16</sup> The approach of these scholars is directly opposed to that of Breuilly, who wishes to include only political phenomena in his account. However, the cultural approach fits in well with a modernist framework in general that supports the thesis of a watershed around 1800, marked by major changes in terms of industrialisation, the emergence of mass media, and capitalism.<sup>17</sup> Even though some modernists seek to include the wider, premodern source traditions in their accounts by introducing terms such as 'national thought' (Leerssen) and 'ethnie' and 'ethno-symbolism' (Smith), they hold on to a strict division between what happened before and after 1800.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, Smith's ethno-symbolist approach, in particular, does acknowledge the need to comprehend the rise of nations from a broader historical perspective, attaching much importance to common traditions, shared memories and popular symbols of 'ethnies'.<sup>19</sup>

One of the reasons that the modernist account has been so successful lies in the type of factors used to explain the rise of nationalism, such as industrialisation, the rise of mass media, and democratisation. They serve to explain broad processes on a macro level. Another reason is the interrelatedness of arguments: modernity is defined by a series of causes that are also presupposed for the rise of nationalism. Hence, the conclusion is drawn that nationalism should be considered as a product of modernity. The modernist way of reasoning has much in common with what has been

labelled in economics as a 'positive feedback loop system'.<sup>20</sup> Part of the output influences the input, while input and output run in the same direction. This means that the system is circular and self-reinforcing: presupposing the existence of one element automatically leads to the reinforcement of another, and so on. The higher the level of generality, the more likely it is that historical events are described in terms of deterministic processes and will entail these types of positive feedback loops.<sup>21</sup>

The main criticism offered by traditionalists or premodernists is that historical practices are much more obstinate, unpredictable and contingent than these grand schemes allow room for. Traditionalists maintain that nations are not products of modernity as nations and nationhood existed before modernity. There is a wide variety in approaches and geographical scope, and scholars differ widely in the starting dates of their alternative histories. Scholars of premodern national thought, however, share their unease with the current theoretical framework into which it is difficult, if not impossible, to fit their more source-based studies. Many of their studies focus on nations that took the form of a national cultural and political community from a very early stage, such as England, Sweden, France and the Dutch Republic.<sup>22</sup> Andrew Hastings, for instance, argues that England presents the 'prototype' of a nation and a nation-state and that a sense of national unity was already detectable there by the end of the tenth century.<sup>23</sup> Others locate the emergence of British national identity in the first decades of the sixteenth century or the Elizabethan era.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch Republic is also often used as a counter-example to modernist accounts: although each of the seven provinces was autonomous, centralist tendencies on the level of official state politics were abundantly present. Likewise, cultural symbols and narratives that contributed to a sense of a common national identity were plentiful in printed matter from the late sixteenth century onwards.<sup>25</sup>

Two recent, more theoretically based, attacks on the modernist paradigm stand out: *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (2012) by Caspar Hirschi, and *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2013) by Azar Gat.<sup>26</sup> Hirschi offers a 'counter-theory' to modernist paradigms by understanding nationalism as a linguistic phenomenon that constructed and represented historical realities. Taking 'national honour' and 'national freedom' as key concepts, his reconstruction of the history of nationalism consists of three phases: he argues that nationalism has its origins in Catholic Europe in the fourteenth century, that forms of nationalism abounded in the Renaissance, and that 'modern nationalism could only become such a mobilising force because of its presence in politics, scholarship and

art of long ago'.<sup>27</sup> Gat broadens the temporal and geographic scope even further by discussing kin-culture communities and the evolution of these communities into tribes and then states in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. This evolution took place much earlier than usually is assumed: 'Nations and national states can be found wherever states emerged since the beginning of history'.<sup>28</sup> Central in his argument are the concepts of 'ethnie' and 'political ethnicity'. His use of 'ethnie' bears much resemblance to Smith's, but is less restricted in terms of time and space: it's not only the basis of historical states, but also of new immigrant states. 'Political ethnicity' expresses the idea that ethnicity has been political and politicised throughout the ages. Gat considers national states as particular forms or templates of political ethnicity, in which 'a rough congruence exists between a single, dominant people, and a state'.<sup>29</sup> Part of Gat's argumentation is directed against overestimating literacy, as illiterate societies had their own 'potent means of wide-scale cultural transmission'.<sup>30</sup>

This volume does not offer a fully developed, coherent counter-theory nor do all authors share the same views with regard to the above-mentioned theoretical debates. The positions range from rejecting the dichotomy between modernists and traditionalists altogether, to relativising the differences. Azar Gat and Andrew Hadfield (Chapters 1 and 2), for instance, see no reason to hold on to these schemes, while David Bell (Chapter 3) and László Marác (Chapter 13) prefer to maintain a distinction between premodern and modern forms of nationhood. What connects all contributions, however, is their critical attitude towards an exclusively modernist approach that precludes the admission of earlier phases of history into accounts of nationhood and national identity formation. The aim of this book is to show that premodern developments are not just introductory to the 'real thing' that occurred in the nineteenth century, but integral, vital parts of a larger picture.

As such, this volume challenges the idea of a watershed between premodern and modern forms of nation-building from four basic assumptions. Firstly, source-based research should always be at the heart of studies in ethnicity, nation and nationalism. It is no use denying the existence of nations and national identities (or 'national character' to use Hume's phrase) in the early modern period when these concepts are so abundantly present in the printed material of this era. Secondly, a contextualising and historicising approach is called for, when trying to assess the contemporary meaning of these concepts: how were they used, in what political and social contexts and what changes did they undergo over the course of time? Thirdly, cultural continuities with regard to memory cultures and (invented) traditions

deserve more attention than they have received to date. In general, there seems to be little exchange between modernists and premodernists, although there is much to gain by exchanging research results.<sup>31</sup> Finally, culture and politics are hardly ever entirely separate spheres, certainly not in the period under review here. Cultural expressions, such as pamphlets, historiographies, poems and songs, were used to mobilise public opinion and gain support for political causes, including the defence of what was considered to be the common 'patria'.<sup>32</sup>

*The Roots of Nationalism*, however, does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the entire European continent. England, France, Spain and the Netherlands, for instance, are included, while Italy and Germany are notably absent. From the perspective of nationalism studies the last two nations have already received much attention, in particular because they became politically unified at a rather late date: in 1870 and 1871, respectively. This circumstance has only widened the gap between those scholars who wish to speak of a national Italian or German identity only after this unification and those who stress the necessity of a long-term view.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, this volume does include several nations that have been studied less from the perspective of national identity formation and that challenge the idea of clear boundaries between premodern and modern manifestations of national thought, such as Wales, Iceland, Hungary and Russia. In the chapters devoted to these nations, the authors explicitly seek to connect early modern cultural expressions of a 'national' identity with later, nineteenth-century developments.

The first part of this book, *The Modernist Paradigm Contested*, offers three different views on modernist accounts of nationalism. Although the authors of this section take different positions regarding how far one can stretch the use of concepts such as the 'nation' and 'nationalism', they have in common that they plead for a more source-based praxis and flexible attitude towards issues of continuity and discontinuity. In the opening chapter, Azar Gat defends the traditionalist position, but criticises the use of subdivisions such as 'primordial' and 'perennial', which mainly serve rhetorical modernist purposes. Instead, he introduces 'political ethnicity' as a category, which emphasises the strong potency of ethno-national ties and their lasting impact on human history. According to Gat, modernists have failed to recognise that ethnic ties have always been political and politicised, and that there was a clear congruence between culture, ethnicity and state before the advent of modernity. Gat points to the rise of national states in medieval Europe, such as England, Denmark, Norway and Poland, and the (often political) use of the word 'natio' in medieval documents to



reinforce his claim that ethnic and national affinities have deep roots and are amongst the most powerful forces in human history. In his view, the main difference between premodern and modern nationhood lies in the fact that premodern national identity remained secondary to the dynastic principle in earlier times, while it became the primary formal, legal and ideological principle during modern times.

Andrew Hadfield is equally critical of modernist accounts and raises the question whether it is possible to imagine a time in which nations did not exist (Chapter 2). He argues that it would be much more fruitful if historians would acknowledge that human beings have always had a sense of national identity. Such a position would relieve them from having to choose between two evils: the idea that historians should be able to either pinpoint the exact moment of a nation's birth or adhere to the idea that nations are modern inventions. He points to the role of the public sphere, which, in his view, by no means was an eighteenth-century invention, and the role of literature in spreading images of national identity. The emergence of the printing press, its variety and potential significance, are therefore crucial for our understanding of the development of nations. He illustrates that point by discussing the work of two early-seventeenth-century English poets who tried to articulate an understanding of the nation that might even be called 'nationalistic', at least if one acknowledges their role in a national tradition that did not emerge out of nothing in the nineteenth century.

David Bell reflects on issues of continuity and discontinuity with regard to the rise of nationalism in revolutionary France, and the supposed intrinsic relationship between nationalism and modernity (Chapter 3). He agrees that a clear distinction between national sentiments and the rise of the political ideology nationalism during the French Revolution should be maintained, but that this rise can be properly understood only by including earlier stages of French history. He distinguishes three phases: firstly, the decades around 1700, during which the concepts of 'nation' and 'patrie' acquired new political significance; secondly, the turbulent years of the French Revolution, when the principal goal of the revolutionaries became to transform the peoples of France into one single nation united by common values, common practices and a common language (this marked the birth of nationalism in France); and thirdly, the radical phase of the French Revolution, in 1793-94, when a truly nationalist programme took shape.

However, Bell warns against an overly teleological and universalist approach, in which the French Revolution becomes the all-encompassing model of later republican regimes and nationalist movements. For instance, historians should avoid drawing a straight line from the radical

revolutionaries of the 1790s to the Third Republic. On the contrary, during the Napoleonic regime an entirely different strategy was followed, as Napoleon propagated European integration and the transformation of the peoples of Europe into one single people. Bell also relativises the tendency to take the nation-state as the sole point of reference in historical surveys of the nineteenth century, as global empires played an equally important role. In other words, stating that nationalism is a modern, conscious political programme does not imply that nationalism was or is essential to modernity: modernity does not automatically favour this way of organising and mobilising populations and territories.

### Cultural Roots of Nationalism

The next parts (II-V) are devoted to a series of case studies from various European perspectives. In these essays, the contributors search for traces of national identity formation in early modern sources and for the ways identities developed over time. Cultural continuity is the key word here: the basic idea is that the shaping of national identities was firmly rooted in premodern source traditions, and that they were just as much constructed, invented and imagined as in modern times. Revisiting concepts such as 'invention of tradition' and 'imagined community' that are usually applied to the modern era can demonstrate the nature of the proposed continuities.

It is generally acknowledged that the shaping of collective memory cultures was vital for spreading nationalist sentiments in the nineteenth century: national unity was shaped by inventing traditions, such as symbols, rituals, heroic stories and founding myths. They provided the nation with 'authentic' traditions and roots that characterised its unique history and character. The nation's 'identity checklist', as Anne-Marie Thiesse aptly calls it, included founding fathers, national heroes, traditional costumes, a language, an emblematic animal, and a history establishing its strength and resilience throughout the ages.<sup>34</sup> Many of these elements, however, went back to earlier stages of history: the Dutch lion, the Gallic rooster, and the German eagle, for instance, were not inventions of the nineteenth century, but had already served a long time as emblematic animals, especially in times of war. They were reused in a new historical context, without losing the older values attached to these symbols. They contributed to feelings of national unity, power and resilience precisely because of their rootedness in a long and meaningful history. Smith and Gat have both pointed out the misleading connotations of 'invention of tradition'; it conceals that many

symbols and rituals were only partly new inventions, and were rooted in a longer, cultural history.<sup>35</sup> As Gat puts it, 'the inherently fanciful processing and reprocessing of tradition did not mean fabrication *ex nihilo*. Rather, it primarily involved selective reworking of existing historical materials and folk memories which often had at least some basis in reality'.<sup>36</sup>

Something similar can be said of the 'imagined community'. Anderson has famously argued that modern nations function as imagined communities: although members do not know most of their fellow members, they all have an image of their (national) community in their minds. These images are spread mainly through mass media and other institutions, such as newspapers and books.<sup>37</sup> A parallel can be drawn with early modern times, when printed material was also used to unite people for common causes in early modern Europe (a point that is also brought up by Andrew Hadfield in Chapter 2). As Peter Burke has suggested, Bibles in the vernacular, printed catechisms and other religious writings stimulated the formation of imagined communities based on a common language.<sup>38</sup> In times of war or political crisis, feelings of patriotism and unity were aroused and propagated by pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, poems and theatre plays.<sup>39</sup> One should, however, keep in mind that these imagined communities differed from those of the nineteenth century. The circulation of printed material was much lower, and one should be cautious not to overstate the impact of (partly literary) discourses.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the mental landscape of authors and readers was shaped through concepts such as 'the fatherland' and 'the nation'. Not all inhabitants may have identified with these 'imagined' communities, but they *did* exist, at least in the minds of intellectuals and poets, who created different kinds of unifying images, using metaphors and topical images that surpassed civic and regional borders.<sup>41</sup>

Parts two and four of this volume (*The Genealogy of National Identity* and *Maps, Language and Canonisation*) are centred around the invention of national myths in the premodern era, while parts three and five (*Negative Mirror Imaging* and *Nation in the Age of Revolution*) concentrate on the shaping of (national) imagined communities in reaction to foreign threats and warfare. The contributors of the second section, *The Genealogy of National Identity*, make clear that national traditions played a key role in early modern historiographical writings, which often served as tools for political propaganda. That this process of nationalisation took place not only at a textual level, but also at that of the agents, is shown by Cesc Esteve (Chapter 4). The rise of official state historiography in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe gave rise to an intellectual debate on the

preferred profile of the state historian. On the one hand, it was considered prerequisite that the official chronicler of the Spanish Catholic monarchs be native born because his knowledge of and affinities with the object of his study would be an advantage. On the other hand, it was also argued that too much affinity could affect the historian's neutrality and credibility. These offsetting arguments led some historians to operate cautiously with regard to this issue, for if one thing was very clear, it was that official historiography primarily served to strengthen the power of the Spanish monarchy.

The other contributions in this section examine the way national identity was shaped in early modern Icelandic, Dutch, Russian and Welsh historiographical texts. Kim Middel discusses the work of the Icelandic historiographer Arngrímur Jónsson (1568-1648), who carefully balanced foregrounding Icelandic self-awareness with staying within the realm of the Danish king, while Jan Waszink concentrates on early-seventeenth-century perceptions of 'Dutch' and Low Countries' nationhood in two works of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (Chapters 5 and 6). Waszink shows that the view of a native-born historian differed much from that of the foreigner. While Grotius tended to take the provincial level as the locus of the primary cultural and political unity of a people, the Scotsman John Barclay did not take the provincial level into consideration at all, but treated the people of the Low Countries as a cultural unity with shared manners and characteristics. Gregory Carleton focuses on an account of the so-called Times of Troubles (1598-1613) in Russia, by the church official Avraam Palitsyn (Chapter 7). Carleton demonstrates that land, faith and the Russian people merged into an organic whole, aligned along an intersecting spiritual-terrestrial axis that was identified as 'Great Russia'. A Welsh perspective is chosen by Adam Coward, who describes the national myths that circulated in the long eighteenth century in Wales and served to underline the nation's unique character (Chapter 8).

What these papers have in common is an effort to connect the seventeenth-century national self-images and traditions with later uses in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, Middel shows how Arngrímur laid the foundation for the development of Icelandic linguistic identity in later times. His work was reused by a nineteenth-century Danish philologist for his research on the origins of the Icelandic language and thus served in the reinvention of the roots of the Icelandic nation. Carleton demonstrates that in Palitsyn's work one can already observe the archetypes that would define the collective imagination of nineteenth-century Russian nationalism, as found in Tolstoy's narrative of the 1812 campaign in *War and Peace*. In the same vein, Coward argues

that traditional myths were kept alive throughout the ages: while earlier myths about Welsh origins were reimagined in the eighteenth century, the tales of this period influenced Welsh identity in modern representations of the Welsh nation.

Middel and Coward both point to the importance of language as a marker of national identity. The role of language is also examined in the fourth part of this book, *Maps, Canonisation and Language*. László Maráczi demonstrates that language was one of the core features of early modern Hungarian nationhood and argues that there exists long-term continuity between the Hungarian sixteenth-century ethno-linguistic identity and modern Hungarian linguistic nationalism (Chapter 12). His historical overview is based upon canonical Hungarian works that are more or less related in a 'vertical web' in time, as they contain many references and cross-references. This source tradition does not suggest a sudden and absolute rupture between premodern and modern expressions of an ethnic-linguistic Hungarian identity, but a development in which continuity prevailed.

Two other types of continuity that span the premodern and modern eras are literary canons and maps. Lieke van Deinsen discusses an early-eighteenth-century Dutch initiative to construct a national canon of literature: the *Panpoëticon Batavum* (Chapter 13). This wooden cabinet contained a collection of portraits of Dutch poets and learned men from the past and present. This collection inspired many poets and attracted numerous visitors; it therefore gave rise to vivid discussions, reflections and debates on the vernacular literary tradition well before the development of an official literary canon in the nineteenth century. Another way of drawing borders between different nations was cartography. Michael Wintle discusses how maps of Europe and of individual nations added to nation-building during the Enlightenment (Chapter 14). He argues that visual territorialisation could inspire and spread national feelings of loyalty and that maps were used to seek the support of the people of the nation, rather than simply the endorsement of the monarch. In other words, nation, territory, and landscape, rather than the monarch and the territory, were linked in the cartographical representations.

While the above-mentioned essays focus on long-standing traditions, the sections on *Negative Mirror Imaging* and *Nation in the Age of Revolution* take contemporary political conflicts as the driving force behind the shaping of national identities. Several scholars have pointed out the importance of warfare for the development of distinctive regional and national identities: conflicts and hostility led to sharpened boundaries

between groups.<sup>42</sup> National self-images were usually constructed by opposing them to images of foreign and hostile nations. It is in the field of 'imagology', the study of literary representations of nationhood and national identities, that these images have been studied most profoundly.<sup>43</sup> The authors of this section open up new horizons by exploring new source material (political tracts, occasional writings and travel accounts) and by taking warfare as the starting point for the shaping of national self-images. They show that the incentives for forging national identities were often negative: negative images of foreign nations were used as input for a positive self-image.

Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez takes the contemporary use of words ('nuestra España' and 'nuestra nación') as the starting point for an analysis of Spanish apologetic discourse during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-21) (Chapter 9). She demonstrates how a clear and well-defined Spanish national identity was articulated in reaction to the often very negative image of Spain that was propagated in the Netherlands and other European nations. The Black Legend was particularly used to strengthen a positive self-image, in which critical voices were taken up in a narrative framework that favoured typically Spanish virtues – hence, the negative image was used to Spain's advantage.

*Hetero-image* and *auto-image* played an equally important role during the three Anglo-Dutch Wars that were fought between 1650 and 1674, as Gijs Rommelse shows (Chapter 10). Implicitly he also tackles the persistent idea that the decentralised governmental and institutional structure of the Dutch Republic was no impediment to the construction of a Dutch national identity. Due to a flourishing media market that gave room for ample political debates, these self-images were spread on a supra-regional level. They were given a new impulse during the wars with England, when negative character traits of the English enemy were used to create positive images of the Dutch nation, thereby reaffirming their own national identity. Alan Moss focuses on the national traumas and victories as markers of national identity in early modern travel accounts (Chapter 11). Dutch travellers often compared foreign sites and events to their fatherland and its history, and used them to reflect on their own Dutch religious background and identity.

The last section, *Nation in the Age of Revolution*, deals with expressions of Belgian and Dutch nationhood as they were articulated in popular media, such as pamphlets and songs. Jane Judge scrutinises the articulation of a Belgian national identity during the early revolutionary years 1787-90 (Chapter 15). Belgium is a notoriously difficult case with regard to the

issue of national identity formation. Since the separation of the southern provinces from the northern provinces in 1579, each part had developed its own distinctive religious and political culture. The historian Jean Stengers speaks of 'la Scission du Nord et du Sud et de la naissance dans les Pays-Bas de deux sentiments nationaux distinct'.<sup>44</sup> For a long time, the southern provinces were governed by foreign rulers, first by the Spanish king, then by the Habsburg monarchy. In 1787, when Joseph II of Austria started to implement a series of political reforms that nullified the provincial Estates and Councils, revolt broke out.

In the final chapter, Bart Verheijen shows that popular songs were a means to keep the national spirit alive during the years of French occupation (Chapter 16). Authors not only protested against conscription, which took many young men away from their homes, but also expressed fears that their fatherland would cease to exist. This made them emphasise the particular qualities and strengths of the Dutch nation, and it prompted them to envision a future in which sovereignty was secured. Interestingly enough, their lamentations went hand in hand with a plea for the return of the Prince of Orange, who gradually came to symbolise the hidden strength of a nation that in its recent patriotic past had radically cut all ties with the house of Orange. From the beginning of 1813, as a reaction to the current political crisis, Orangism became a constitutive force in articulating Dutch national identity. Parts of this nationalist discourse went back to earlier writings, reusing and reinventing a wide range of national symbols and Orangist rhetorics – a clear signal that the pamphleteers looked for continuities with the past.

Of all the case studies presented in this volume, the idea of an imagined community is most appealing in the last two cases: the Belgian and Dutch nations did not exist formally, but were called into existence by means of political activism and writings. Pamphleteers claimed the ownership of the nation by rejecting French domination and legitimising their allegations through historical arguments and by reimagining their communal values and traditions. While the Belgian nation had never been a sovereign state before, the Dutch had a long-standing tradition to look back on. One might, with very good reason, argue that the Belgian case is the typical example of a modern nation being born in the wake of the Revolution. Hence, the modernists have a clear case to support their arguments. However, one can also contrast this case with the situation of other European nations, such as France, Spain, Iceland, England, Hungary, Russia and the Dutch Republic, where national identity was firmly rooted in cultural traditions that spanned the premodern and modern eras.



## Notes

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2. David Hume, 'Of National Characters', in David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*. Edited and with a Foreword, Notes and Glossary by Eugene F. Miller ... Revised edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 197-215, at 207.
3. On the spread of climate theory from antiquity until the eighteenth century, see: Waldemar Zacharsiewicz, *Die Klimatheorie in der Englischen Literatur und Literaturkritik von der Mitte des 16. Bis zum frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna/Stuttgart: Wilhelm Baumüller, 1977).
4. On these source traditions, see, amongst others: Franz K. Stanzel, 'Das Nationalitätenschema in der Literatur und seine Entstehung zu Beginn der Neuzeit', in Günther Bläicher (ed.), *Erstarrtes Denken. Studien zu Klischee, Stereotyp und Vorurteil in englischsprachiger Literatur* (Tübingen: Narr, 1987), 84-96; Franz K. Stanzel, Ingomar Wieler, Waldemar Zacharsiewicz (eds.), *Europäischer Völkerspiegel. Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1999); Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 25-70. On medieval source traditions: Claire Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe* (University of Amsterdam, 2012, doctoral dissertation).
5. I borrow the term 'national cultures' from Peter Burke, 'Nationalisms and Vernaculars, 1500-1800', in John Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-12, at 8. On the steep rise of literature on national character in the second half of the eighteenth century, including the seminal works by Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, see David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France. Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press), 140-68.
6. Hume, *Essays*, 204. On Hume's essay, see Franz K. Stanzel, 'Schemata und Klischees der Völkerbeschreibung in David Humes Essay "Of National Characters"', in Paul G. Buchloch, Inge Leimberg and Herbert Rauber (eds.), *Studien zur englischen und amerikanischen Sprache und Literatur. Festschrift*



- für Hlemut Papjewski* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974), 363-83, at 382-83.
7. The first question was central in one of the key texts in nationalism studies: Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (Paris: Levy, 1882); the second was raised by Ernest Gellner in a debate at Warwick University in 1995. See Ernest Gellner, 'Do nations have navels?', *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996) 3, 366-70 and the response by Anthony Smith, 'Memory and modernity: reflections on Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996) 3, 371-88.
  8. For instance in: Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge 1998); Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: University Press of England, 2000); Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).
  9. See, for instance, Slobodan Drakulic and Trevor W. Harrison, 'Introduction', in Trevor W. Harrison and Slobodan Drakulicz (eds.), *Against Orthodoxy. Studies in Nationalism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 1-14; Azar Gat with Alexander Jakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013).
  10. Cf. Gat, *Nations*, 2: 'In this process the rift between the modernist and traditionalist schools is constantly reproduced'.
  11. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1960).
  12. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
  13. John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* [1982] (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.); John Breuilly, 'Approaches to nationalism', in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the nation* (London/New York: Verso, 1996), 146-74.
  14. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).
  15. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*, 13-22, with references to Miroslav Hroch, *Social Precondition of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985); John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales: Europe XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1999). Also see: Joep Leerssen (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, to be published in 2016, and partly online available at [www.spinnet.eu](http://www.spinnet.eu).
  16. Stefan Berger, *The Search for Normality. National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997);

- Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds.), *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
17. Koselleck famously coined the term 'Sattelzeit', referring to this modernisation process that was accelerated by the French Revolution: Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (1964; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: 1979).
  18. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*, 14-5; Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno/Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press), 19-42.
  19. Smith, *The Nation in History*, 65-72.
  20. Feedback is a key concept in economics and management, see Piotr Golec, 'Feedback', [www.economicswebinstitute.org/glossary/feedback.htm](http://www.economicswebinstitute.org/glossary/feedback.htm) (accessed 22 May 2015). Paul Schuurman has analysed Montesquieu's work from the perspective of feedback mechanisms: Paul Schuurman, 'Determinism and causal feedback loops in Montesquieu's explanations for the military rise and fall of Rome', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013) 3, 507-28; the quotation above is taken from p. 509.
  21. *Ibid.*, 509.
  22. To mention just a few examples: Orest Ranum (ed.), *National Consciousness, History, and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986); Klaus Garber (ed.), *Nation und Literatur im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989); Annete Helmchen, *Die Entstehung der Nationen im Europa der frühen Neuzeit Ein integraler Ansatz aus humanistischer Sicht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).
  23. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 4-5; and chapter 1, 'England as a prototype', 35-65.
  24. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 42; Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).
  25. There are a vast number of case studies available on the rise of national thought in the Low Countries and the Dutch Republic. For a general introduction: Robert Stein, 'Introduction', in R. Stein and J. Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations. Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2010), 1-18. On the sixteenth century: Simon Groenveld, 'Natie en patria bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders', in N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland: een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 55-81; Alistair Duke, 'In defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555-1576', in Stein and Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations*, 217-39; the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Marijke Meijer Drees,

- 'Patriottisme in de Nederlandse literatuur (ca. 1650-ca. 1750)', *De nieuwe taalgids* 88 (1995), 247-60; Lotte Jensen, "'Toen 't volk als uit één' mond, lang leve Oranje! Riep". Orangisme in het vredesjaar 1748', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 128 (2015), 1-22; Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined. Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685-1772* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005). Centralist trends in Dutch state politics before the nineteenth century are discussed in Simon Groenveld, Pieter Wagenaar and Frits van der Meer, 'Pre-Napoleonic centralization in a decentralised polity: the case of the Dutch Republic', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 76 (2010), 47-64.
26. Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern German to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012); Gat, *Nations*.
  27. Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 9.
  28. Gat, *Nations*, 4.
  29. *Ibid.*, 18-22.
  30. *Ibid.*, 12.
  31. See, for instance, Rees Davies, 'Nations and National Identities in the Medial World: An Apologia', *Revue Belge d'histoire contemporaine* 34 (2004), 567-79. A longer time perspective has also been argued for within the field of memory studies, which is equally divided between modernists and pre-modernists. See Judith Pollmann and Erika Kuijpers, 'Introduction. On the early modern modernity of modern memory', in *Memory before Modernity. Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 1-22, at 22.
  32. Stein, 'Introduction', 17. For the interconnectedness of culture and politics, also see Tim Blanning, *The Power of Culture and the Culture of Power; Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
  33. The historian Hans-Martin Blitz, for instance, points to a vast body of eighteenth-century works (epics, theatre plays, periodicals, letters, songs) that express a clear sense of a national identity long before the rise of the nation state. Hans-Martin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland. Die deutsche Nation im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). See also Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberger, Kathrin Mayer (eds.), *Nationenbildung: die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellektueller: Italien und Deutschland* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998); Ute Planert, 'Wann beginnt der "modern" deutsche Nationalismus? Plädoyer für eine nationale Sattelzeit', in Jörg Edernkamp and Sven Oliver Müller (ed.), *Die Politik der Nation. Deutscher Nationalismus im Krieg und Krisen 1760-1960* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002), 25-59; Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*. On the rise of Italian consciousness, see: Felix Gilbert, 'Italy', in Orest Ranum (ed.), *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 21-42.

34. Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'National identities: a transnational paradigm', in A. Dieckhoff and C. Jaffrelot (eds.), *Revisiting Nationalism. Theories and Processes* (London: Hurst & Co., 2005), 122-43, at 124.
35. Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2008), 86-90; Gat, *Nations*, 16-7.
36. Ibid., 17.
37. Anderson, *Imagined communities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1987), 16, 38-9.
38. Burke, 'Nationalisms and Vernaculars', 5.
39. Stein, 'Introduction', 16-7.
40. For a critical evaluation of the use of 'imagined community' as a concept, see Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 90-4.
41. Cf. Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland*, 15-6. For a case study on Dutch imagined communities in 1713: Lotte Jensen, 'Visions of Europe: Contrasts and Combinations of National and European Identities in Literary Representations of the Peace of Utrecht (1713)', in Renger de Bruin, Cornelis van der Haven, Lotte Jensen & David Onnekink (eds.), *Performances of Peace. Utrecht 1713* (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2015), 159-78.
42. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 157-60.
43. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2007).
44. Jean Stengers, *Les racines de la Belgique. Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique des origines à 1918*. Volume 1 (Bruxelles: Éditions Racine, 2000), 101.



**Part One**  
The Modernist Paradigm Contested



# 1      Premodern Nations, National Identities, National Sentiments and National Solidarity

*Azar Gat*

While the subject of this volume, like the conference from which it emanates, is early modern nationalism in Europe, the task set to me by the editor is to broaden the frame and discuss premodern nationalism not merely over centuries but over millennia, and not only in Europe but throughout the world. Indeed, my book (with Alexander Yakobson), *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge UP, 2013), challenges the modernist portrayal of nationalism as recent and superficial. The book argues that, reflecting the post-1945 climate of ideas and normative atmosphere, modernists have lost sight of the ethno-national phenomenon's deep roots, and have declared the nation and nationalism to be a pure socio-historical construct or artificially contrived. As a result, they misinterpret the ethno-national phenomenon's historical trajectory and either remain confounded by or turn a blind eye to its highly explosive potency, so evidently one of the strongest forces in human history.

Nations and nationalism are not primordial. Nonetheless, they are rooted in primordial human sentiments of kin-culture affinity, solidarity and mutual cooperation, evolutionarily engraved in human nature. These attachments, permeating social life and extending beyond family to tribe and ethnos, became integral to politics when states emerged *millennia* ago. Ethnicity has always been political and politicised, ever since the beginning of politics, because people have always been heavily biased towards those they view as their kin-culture community. Needless to say, no ethnic identity or people comes neatly packaged with an unchanging essence. Ethnogenesis, processes of ethnic and national fission and fusion, changes of identity and cultural transformation, take place all the time. And still, while always in flux, ethnic and national identities are among the most durable, and most potent, of cultural forms.



## Political Ethnicity and Premodern Imagined Communities

I have introduced the concept of political ethnicity to describe this reality whose historical salience cannot be exaggerated despite the fact that it has been largely downplayed in the literature on the national phenomenon. Similarly, I do not use the terms primordial and perennial to describe the counter-modernist position, as both of them sound metaphysical and unreal, and, indeed, have been invoked as a caricature by modernists. Instead, I employ the term 'traditionalist position', with the double connotation it carries: as having been the traditional view before the rise of modernist theorising; and as the view that nations and nationalism have a long and genuine pedigree, rather than being a wholly fabricated modern myth. I am glad to see that this term is already becoming accepted.

Semantic, factual and normative elements are variably combined in modernist theorising. Semantics is the least problematic. Most modernists insist that equal citizenship and popular sovereignty are inseparable from the concept of the nation. Yet precisely because all these features have been closely intertwined during the modern era, they are easily confounded. I submit that in ordinary usage nationhood means common identification and solidarity with one's people and state, and the political expression of these sentiments, irrespective of whether citizenship is equally enjoyed or popular sovereignty prevails. The real question, then, is whether or not the national phenomenon existed in this sense before modern times. And this leads us to a problem more significant than the semantic: the interpretation of history. I embrace Ernest Gellner's definition of the nation as a rough congruence between culture or ethnicity and state. Yet he and other modernists have erred in claiming that such congruence was confined to modern times.<sup>1</sup>

Modernists deny that the population of premodern states – oppressed peasants scattered in their village communities – had any consciousness of being part of a larger people. Indeed, scarcely noted, what they in fact reject is the existence of premodern *peoples*. This view of premodern society is a caricature of historical realities. Projected by theorists, it is challenged by the great majority of the historians of particular societies. Medieval historian Susan Reynolds is the only one who directly went into the fray in defence of European medieval national states,<sup>2</sup> but many historians express similar views less overtly. Side by side with other pristine forms of statehood, such as city-states and empires, in all of which ethnicity was highly political, there also existed so-called territorial states or dynastic kingdoms. These, however, were most often *national* monarchies, wherein the boundaries of ethnos or people and state largely overlapped.

Of course, the state, in turn, greatly reinforced the ethnic unity of its realm. Ethnicity made the state and the state made ethnicity, in a reciprocal and dialectical process. Indeed, *both* these threads of causation reveal how highly political ethnicity has always been. Why would the state strive to homogenise its realm where possible, were it not for the fact that a sense of common identity immeasurably fostered the people's loyalty legitimised political rule and helped to sustain the state's integrity and independence? Contrary to a widespread view, state-building in a pre-existing ethnic space has been exceedingly easier than ethno-building. What Anthony Smith has claimed for modern nations was also true for premodern national states.<sup>3</sup>

Although the illiterate masses in premodern societies are mute in the written records, one can look at what they did in lieu of what they did not write, surely a clear indication of where they stood. Throughout history peoples habitually rose in arms in desperate struggles to defend or regain their freedom – often by risking their lives, property and much else that was dear. Since, according to the modernist cliché, they only substituted foreign for domestic masters and would in any case have remained oppressed, the only plausible conclusion is that they deeply cared about and fought for their people's *collective* freedom. Clearly the people preferred their own, often hated, masters to 'bloody foreigners'. Nor do we have here merely peasants' response to the disruption of invasion. Popular uprising in pursuit of liberty from foreign rule often occurred *after* a country had long been conquered by an alien power, and sometimes after it was pacified to a degree greater than it had been before the foreign conquest. Reality speaks volumes even though the illiterate masses rarely found somebody to record them.

After shared language, the main bonding elements of premodern peoples and a major instrument of state- and nation-building were the premodern mass cultural forms of epos, ritual and religion. These were widely disseminated by the dense clerical and cultic network spread throughout the countryside and reaching into every town and village. The holiness, righteousness and special mission of one's state and people resonated in every parish. The peasant girl Joan of Arc, who absorbed and expressed this powerful message in her native Lorraine village, was unique only in her remarkable ascent. Herein was the primary and most powerful medium of the premodern national 'imagined community' which Benedict Anderson has so sorely missed. The nation was widely imagined – and as holy and God's chosen one.

Anderson's mistake is twofold. First, the view that universal religious identity preceded national identity ignores the national religions of most peoples *before* the rise of universal religions, as well as the strongly national

character and bias of the local churches of universal faiths, including Christianity, both Western and Eastern. Overwhelmingly, national churches tended to champion the patriotic cause in case of a threat or conflict. Indeed, they often kept the national spirit alive even when the state itself was destroyed and the country was occupied by a foreign invader. The lower clergy in particular, closer to the people in their way of life and sentiments, often assuming leadership positions at the local level, and free from considerations of high politics, tended to be staunchly patriotic. Rather than conflicting with the national idea, religion was one of its strongest pillars.

Anderson's emphasis on literacy and print technology has been much exaggerated, because illiterate societies had their own potent means of wide-scale cultural transmission. Oral epics recited by wandering bards and celebrating gods, kings, heroes and the people – always *ours* – served as a major vehicle of cultural dissemination. It is all too often forgotten that although the masses in historical state societies could not read, they were commonly *read to* – and preached to – in the vernacular by the literati in ceremonies and public gatherings. The effect of all these factors on the consolidation of large-scale 'imagined communities' cannot be overstated.

## Nations in Eurasia from the Earliest Times

Contrary to the European bias of the literature on the national phenomenon – already challenged by other leading critics of modernism such as Anthony Smith, Steven Grosby and Aviel Roshwald – Asia, where states evolved the earliest, is also where some of the most ancient national states can be found. From around 3000 BC, unified Egypt emerged as the world's first large, territorial national state, congruent with a distinct people of shared ethnicity and culture. This, indeed, was the secret of its remarkable endurance for nearly three millennia. Further east, the small national states of Israel, Amon, Moab and Edom, together with other incipient national states and city-states in the Ancient Near East, were destroyed by Assyria, the region's first territorial empire. Indeed, Assyria became the first in a series of empires that henceforth would constitute the standard in Southwest Asia, replacing one another down to the twentieth century. Thus, the pristine emergence of national states in that part of the world was interrupted by the rise and triumph of imperial juggernauts. Hence Elie Kedourie's sweeping and misleading assertion that nationalism and the national state were alien to Asia.<sup>4</sup>

This claim was even less valid in East Asia. China is the world's oldest and largest civilisation and state, comprising roughly a fifth of humanity, then as now. And yet it has been given only minimal attention on the very margins of a Europe-centric debate. Premodern China maintained an extensive, country-wide system of Confucian schools as well as universal military conscription – institutions of the kind hailed as the workshops of modern nationalism. All the same, it has scarcely been asked whether the close connection between state and culture in China – alias nationhood – had anything to do with the country's unique, continuous cultural and political existence over millennia.

Modernist historian and theorist Eric Hobsbawm has noted that China, Korea and Japan are 'among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogeneous'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in all these countries – despite periods of anarchy or foreign rule – culture, a people and state have overlapped for millennia. Again, why should this remarkable congruence have endured so long and so persistently if collective identity did not matter politically in premodern state societies ostensibly defined by elite rule and class divisions? This is a mystery that modernist theorists do not seem to recognise.

Here lies the answer to the question raised by Benedict Anderson: why French Indochina disintegrated into separate national states upon decolonisation, rather than becoming a single realm as did Dutch Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> This outcome ensued because each of Indochina's modern states had a long history and an ethnic core or *Staatsvolk* identified with it, which constituted at least 85 percent of its population. These included: a Viet state since the tenth century; Cambodian-Khmer state since the sixth century; a Siamese-Thai state since the fourteenth century; and a Myanmar-Burman state since the tenth century (the last one being the exception with only 68 percent of the population Bamar). Evidently, Hobsbawm was far too modest in singling out China, Korea and Japan for their close connection between people and state.

Much the same applied to Europe. Peninsular and mountainous Mediterranean Europe in antiquity was dominated by the city-state and later by the Roman Empire. But in the open lands north of the Alpine mountain range, early national states emerged everywhere as the chief module of state formation. Indeed, the earliest European national state that emerged north of the Mediterranean was no other than ancient Macedonia, which Philip II and Alexander would turn into the cornerstone of vast imperial expansion. As a historian of Macedon's emergence writes cautiously but revealingly:

I once wondered whether Macedon was Europe's earliest national state ... the Macedonians were an ethnic group derived from their predecessors, the Makedones, and defined in historical times by their service to their king ... In this sense they were a people, or *ethos*, with a common set of loyalties and a shared historical experience.<sup>7</sup>

After the fall of Rome, and as the former Germanic and Slav lands were drawn into the fold of civilisation, national states mushroomed everywhere north of the old Roman frontier. But before turning to this development, allow me a few words about the Age of Migration. There has been a radical trend, influenced by fashionable anthropological theories and suggesting that the various Germanic conglomerations had no substantial ethnic identity or ethnic core.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, people in and around that core often had various forms of dual or multiple identity, were variably bi- or multi-lingual, or switched between identities. Such behaviour is in the very nature of ethnic identity, and all the more so in such fluid historical circumstances as those that prevailed during the barbarian invasions. But to claim that this was tantamount to an *absence* of ethnic identity among Goths, Franks, Vandals or Huns is simply ridiculous. Indeed some early proponents of this view, such as historian of the Goths Peter Heather, have since backed away from its more extreme expressions.<sup>9</sup>

Soon after the Age of Migration, states – many of them national states – began to emerge throughout Europe. Medieval England saw the formation of a national state, where people and state overlapped, both before and after the Norman Conquest, first in the tenth-eleventh centuries and again in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. A Scottish nation, popularly defended against English occupation, was in existence by 1300. In the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), the right of the '*Scottorum nacio*' to independence was proclaimed in the name of the entire community, comprising the signatory lords 'and the other barons, and freeholders and the whole community of the realm of Scotland'.<sup>10</sup> There had been a Danish national state by the tenth century, a Norwegian one by the eleventh century, and a Swedish one shortly after. The medieval Holy Roman Empire until about 1500 was – despite imperial ambitions – a quintessentially German state, as were, by no accident, practically all its emperors and electoral princes except for the king of Bohemia (himself a German after 1310). There was a Czech national state from the late ninth century, and a popular mobilisation under the Hussites in the fifteenth century that stressed the uniqueness of the Czech land, language and people. Gellner went badly astray in portraying premodern Bohemia and Moravia as non-national. The truth of the matter

was that the Czech lands had been thoroughly national *before* losing their national independence and much of their national identity following their disastrous defeat at the Battle of the White Mountain (1620).

There was a Polish state from the tenth century, in alliance with Lithuania from the fourteenth century and distinct from the Ukraine, as Bohdan Khmelnytsky's revolt in the Ukraine demonstrates. Although the Polish state was famously dominated by the aristocracy that harshly oppressed the Polish peasantry, the latter did not join the Ukrainian revolt and, on the contrary, rose in arms against the Swedish occupiers during the Deluge. Similarly, there was a unified Russian state from the tenth century, and again from around 1500. And although the Russian people lacked any rights, they revolted en masse against Polish rule in the early seventeenth century; were called upon by Peter the Great to save the holy Russian motherland from the Swedes before Poltava in the early eighteenth century; and everywhere joined in the destruction of Napoleon's invading army in the early nineteenth century. The most backward, and supposedly pre-nationalist, power in Europe faced the national forces raised by revolutionary France with no less national fervour. In southeast Europe there was a Bulgarian state from around 800, while Serb and Hungarian states existed by the tenth century – until all of them fell before the Ottomans.

Thus, empires – in this case, the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg – were the powerful engines which through superior force destroyed national states that had been budding everywhere from early on in the process of state formation. Rather than being the nineteenth-century nationalist fabrications that modernists claim them to be, medieval European nations turn out to be most authentic and more relevant to the subject of nationhood than the early modern period in east-central Europe, postulated as the standard by modernists. Ironically, it is modernists who reveal here the unhistorical anachronism with which they charge their antagonists. After all the necessary debunking of nationalist myths, it is still the case that the great majority of the European peoples and nations have exhibited remarkable resilience, going back to an incipient medieval consolidation of state societies on the basis of yet earlier ethnic formations.

## Surprise – The Meaning of *Natio* Is Nation

In my book I cite the many uses of the concept of nation in the premodern sources, both in the Latin forms *gens* and *natio/nacio* and in their vernacular derivatives. These references include, for example: Bede's *gens anglorum* in

the seventh century; the Serb *natio* of *The Royal Frankish Annals* for the year 822; priest Helmold's twelfth-century chronicles and account of the 'many *naciones*' around the Baltic, 'the Danes and the Swedes' to the north and 'the Slavic *naciones*' to the south; Saxo Grammaticus's thirteenth-century Danes, who like all '*nationes*' are in the habit of vaunting the fame of their achievements, and joy in recollecting their ancestors'; the Scottish official plea to the Pope in the Declaration of Arbroath (1320) on behalf of the '*Scottorum nacio*'; the German *Nation* in the official title of the Reich and in Luther's address in the early sixteenth century; the prominence of the Czech *gens* in a pronouncedly ethno-national sense in the fifteenth-century Hussite written records; the Polish fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries definition of the nation in cultural and linguistic terms; and the fervent rhetoric of a Hungarian ethnic *natio* in the seventeenth century.

The context, meaning and significance of the concept of nation in all these cases are abundantly clear. It should be sufficient to discard the strange quirk in the literature on the national phenomenon: the notion that the word nation itself is a new one and that its earlier Latin-medieval forms actually meant something different.<sup>11</sup> As Susan Reynolds has written in refutation of this mistake:

There is no foundation at all for the belief, common among students of modern nationalism, that the world *natio* was seldom used in the Middle Ages except to describe the *nationes* into which university students were divided ... the groups which medieval writers called *gentes*, *nationes*, or *populi* were actually thought of as units of common biological descent ... as well as of common culture.<sup>12</sup>

Medievalist Julia Smith and early modern historian of Poland David Althoen write in the same spirit.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Johan Huizinga (who better to cite in the Netherlands?) had made the same point as far back as 1940:

The word *natio* has always remained much more current than *patria*. Actually it had changed very little in connotation since classical times. Closely linked with *natus* and *natura*, it vaguely indicated a larger context than *gens* or *populus*, but without being any fixed distinction between the three terms. The Vulgate used *gentes*, *populos*, and *nationes* interchangeably for the nations of the Old Testament ...<sup>14</sup>

Gradually ... Latin Christendom arranged itself in a number of kingdoms corresponding, though still very roughly, to national lines ... France,



England, and Scotland, the three Scandinavian kingdoms, Aragon, Castile, and Portugal, Sicily, Hungary, and Poland had all of them taken their places as units of Latin Christendom by around 1150.<sup>15</sup>

The most remarkable medieval document I have come across relating to the question of the nation – scarcely noted in the modern debate – deals with the deliberations on this question in the ecclesiastic Council of Constance (1416). The Catholic Church's ecumenical councils supposedly embodied the indivisible unity of the Church. But in practice they introduced representation by nations and national bloc voting from the thirteenth century on. At the Council of Vienne (1311-12), there was a separate vote by the following 'nations': Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Danes, English, Scotch, Irish and French. At the Council of Pisa (1409), the larger states dominated, and representation clustered around the delegations from Italy, France, Germany and England (the Spaniards were absent). Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Danes and Swedes were included in the German 'nation'; the Mediterranean periphery (except Spain which joined later) in the Italian 'nation'; the French periphery in the French 'nation'; and the British Isles in the English 'nation'. Soon, however, claims for separate representation for the smaller nations were made on the basis of language and sovereignty.

Unsurprisingly, the realities of power politics helped determine which claim was accorded recognition. We have no space to go over the fascinating details of these deliberations. However, here is how the English delegation defined the nation, stressing the concept's both ethno-cultural and territorial aspects:

whether nation (*natio*) be understood as a people (*gens*) marked off from others by blood relationship and habit of unity or by peculiarities of language ... or whether nation (*natio*) be understood, as it should be, as a territory ...<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the English delegation put forward as a general truism a seemingly strikingly modern concept of nation as transcending the boundaries of dynastic rule:

Everyone knows that it matters not whether a nation obeys one prince only or several. Are there not many kingdoms in the Spanish nation that pay no tribute to the king of Castile, the chief ruler of Spain? But it does not follow that they are not parts of the Spanish nation.<sup>17</sup>



It is difficult to imagine more impressive evidence for the national question in medieval Europe.

## The Pedigree of Dutch Nationhood

As the conference from which this volume emanates took place in the Netherlands and was prompted by the question of Dutch nationhood and nationalism in the early modern period – that is, before they were supposed to exist according to the modernist dogma – a few comments are called for concerning the Dutch case. As we have seen above, the Dutch are not at all unique in having formed a strong national identity soon after their independence and long before the French and Industrial revolutions. Dutch historians have clearly been confounded by the fact that what they well know to be a very genuine and deep historical reality is widely regarded as a heresy within the theory of nationalism dominated by the modernist school. In this respect, they are not different from their peers in Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Sweden or Scotland, to name but a few examples, who are told that the long premodern existence of their respective peoples and nations is a nineteenth-century myth that is strictly improper and naïve for scholars to hold. The position in which they are placed is absurd to the point of amusement. At the same time, the Dutch nation is different from the others mentioned in that it does *not* extend far back into the Middle Ages as do some of Europe's 'old nations', to use Hugh Seton-Watson's phrase.<sup>18</sup> Dutch nationhood emerged only with the revolt, secession and independence, from the later part of the sixteenth century. Indeed, this timing explains the framing of this volume around early modern Europe from 1600 onward, which perfectly fits the special features of the Dutch case. Earlier, the people of the Low Countries belonged to an admittedly very heterogeneous Germanic linguistic space, and politically, too, they were part of the Holy Roman Empire, again, basically a German state.

A number of historical events and developments, some of them quite contingent, facilitated the formation of a distinct Dutch national identity. The detachment of the Low Countries from the Empire by Charles V for reasons of dynastic inheritance and their transfer to the Spanish realm were clearly of major significance in this process. The adoption of the vernacular, rather than High German, as the Dutch literary language signified another major break with the Germanic space. Note that the German-speaking Swiss, who also formed a splinter national entity from that space, took a different course and adopted High German rather than *Schweizerdeutsch* as

their literary language. This is probably the reason why their spoken dialect is commonly referred to as 'German', whereas Dutch is regarded as a separate language, even though their relation to the Germanic linguistic space is otherwise quite similar. The United Provinces' spectacular commercial success at the very moment that the world was opened to European trade provided the rebelling Dutch with the means to defend themselves, while also increasing their incentive to do so. This commercial success in turn made possible exceedingly high urbanisation rates, unmatched anywhere else in early modern Europe. Urbanisation is another factor that is supposed to foster the formation of a common national identity, of course among a population that shares ethno-cultural characteristics. In this respect, the dominance of Holland and Amsterdam within the otherwise quite diverse United Provinces provided a core that facilitated national consolidation. Furthermore, the Low Countries' ability to shelter behind water barriers ensured their survival, in the same way that the Swiss Confederation was shielded by its mountain fortress. As the Netherlands secured its independence, the usual processes of 'nation-building' could take their course during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

### **The Modernist Allure – and Fallacy**

The historical salience of premodern political ethnicity and nationhood does not imply that nationalism was either a given, an unchanging quantity, or otherwise immutable. Nor am I claiming that the people of premodern national states were as closely integrated and highly mobilised as the people of modern national states are. The sweeping process of economic and social modernisation made a difference, indeed, a huge difference. Modernists are generally correct about much of what they write with respect to modern developments. However, nations were far from being a creation of the modern era. The idea that the concept of nation was unknown, unimportant or devoid of political significance to the people of the premodern world is one of the greatest missteps taken by modern social theory.

The change from the premodern to the modern with respect to the role of nationhood can be described as follows: while premodern national identity was always highly potent politically, largely underpinning the frontiers of loyalty, and thus borders, among political communities, it was secondary to the dynastic principle and to the right of the conqueror in the *legitimation discourse*; by contrast, it became the paramount formal, legal and ideological principle during modern times, as sovereignty became invested

in the people rather than in the ruler. Rather than inventing nationalism, modernity *released, transformed and enhanced* it. This was a truly massive change, yet less drastic than modernists construe it to be. They have been overly impressed by the truly revolutionary modern transformation, as well as by the 'creative' reworking of existing traditions, memories and myths by nationalists and state authorities, the so-called 'invention of tradition'. Modernists have sweepingly assumed that the constant adaptation of materials that is intrinsic to the flow of tradition, including fabrication and manipulation, wholly invalidates the nationalist claim, whereas it often merely tints genuine realities. Indeed, while myths abound in the nationalistic discourse, modernist counter-myths have been almost as easily created. Imagined communities do not mean invented, nor does invented tradition imply wholesale fabrication. The fashionable shibboleths which have become dominant in the social sciences obscure the fact that social phenomena tend to be *both* deeply rooted *and* construed. There is nothing mutually exclusive here.

The modernist school has won hegemonic status in the study of nationalism for a number of interrelated reasons. First, there was an inevitable, necessary and justified reaction against the naïve and sometimes also consciously manipulative sweeping nationalistic narratives, nineteenth-century style, which questioned their authenticity and subjected them to a detailed historical scrutiny. However, it was all too easy to get carried away in this process and believe that *everything* was an invented myth, thereby throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The pendulum has swung too far, and it is only natural that it is beginning to swing in the other direction, in a dialectical process. A true equilibrium point and higher synthesis are needed, which will incorporate the long history and deep roots of political ethnicity and nationalism, *as well as* their far-reaching modern transformation. It should be recognised that the very genuine nature of the ethno-national phenomenon is also what makes it the object of mythmaking and manipulation. Only something that touches a very sensitive chord can be so powerfully manipulated.

Another major reason for the modernist hegemony is ideological rather than strictly scholarly, and is thus far more difficult to overcome. Liberalism, the hegemonic ideology in the West since 1945, views nationalism with understandable suspicion. Liberalism and nationalism were inseparable from each other during the nineteenth century, as the right of peoples to national self-determination was widely regarded as part of the liberal platform. This platform, reaffirmed by President Woodrow Wilson as the blueprint for a twentieth-century world order, has in fact become the norm

in today's world. Indeed, contrary to the rhetoric about a post-nationalistic age, the crucial development of our times has actually been the *acceptance* of national self-determination on the principle of the people's choice throughout the developed world. At the same time, the horrendous manifestations of aggressive and chauvinistic nationalism, culminating in Nazism, have made liberals deeply ambivalent if not hostile towards the national idea. Furthermore, liberalism professes universalism, whereas nationalism, even in a liberal form, incorporates particularistic elements of group identity and solidarity. From the liberal misgivings with respect to nationalism it was only a short step to deny that ethnic and national affiliations were genuine and deep-rooted sentiments of great efficacy and dismiss them as no more than instrumental fabrications, the product of the specific conditions of a particular and transient era.

Ironically, in construing nationalism as a modern, nationalistic ideological fabrication, the modernists themselves have manifested an ideological false consciousness of the type they so vehemently criticise in others. Although detecting ideological biases has become the stock in trade of scholars in the humanities and social science, they themselves all too often fall victim to the strong human predilection to view the world through the prisms of their particular set of assumptions and values that are perceived as transparent and natural. Comprehensive outlooks rule. In our subject, this applies to modernists during the liberal era, as much as it did to nationalists during the heyday of nationalist ideologists. Within the framework of the dominant discourse any alternative perspective and inconvenient facts are dismissed as ridiculously misplaced, immaterial and illegitimate. It is impossible to explain the hype surrounding the modernist writings except in connection with the dominant ideology of our times. A massive, ideological herd phenomenon has been at work. As liberalism remains hegemonic – or at least, given the alternatives, one hopes that it does – the modernist discourse with respect to the national phenomenon is unlikely to go away.

Yet another related reason for the rise of modernism in the study of nationalism is the clean-slate view of human nature that went hand in hand with liberal ideology during the middle part of the twentieth century when the modernist theory was conceived. In this framework, scholars lacked the theoretical tools to comprehend the deep roots of the ethnic and national phenomenon in naturally evolved human propensities. This is strikingly revealed in Gellner's unfortunate pronouncement that 'nationalism does not have any very deep roots in the human psyche' – after which he confessed to be deeply moved by his native Bohemian folk nationalism.

For much of the twentieth century the idea that human nature had *anything* to do with social realities was anathema to historians and social scientists. And that which we lack the means to comprehend we do not see even if it is staring us in the face: ethnic and national affinities have deep roots in the human psyche, and they have been among the most powerful forces in human history – in early modern Europe, and millennia earlier, throughout the world.

## Notes

1. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
2. Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
3. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), and many other works.
4. Elie Kedourie, 'Introduction' to Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (New York: New American Library, 1970).
5. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 66.
6. Christopher Goscha, 'Anam and Vietnam in the New Indochinese Space, 1887-1945', in S. Tønneson and H. Antlöv (eds.), *Asian Forms of the Nation* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 67-92; David Henley, 'Ethnographical Integration and Exclusion in Anticolonial Nationalism: Indonesia and Indochina', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37 (1995), 286-324.
7. Eugene Borza, *In the Shadow of the Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 281-2.
8. An extreme example is Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500-700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), and idem, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge UP, 2006). Disregarding generations of linguistic and other research, Curta casually suggests that the Slavs did not immigrate to the Danube frontier from the north, but somehow emerged there in the middle of the first millennium. Why then their language should be so similar to that of other Slavs in northern and eastern Europe remains unclear.
9. Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), xiv.
10. For the text see James Ferguson, *The Declaration of Arbroath* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, n.d.), 4-7.
11. The claim seems to have been introduced by Guido Zernatt, 'Nation: The History of a Word', *The Review of Politics*, 6 (1944), 351-66, and then copied from one study to another.
12. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe*, 255-6.

13. Julia Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500-1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 261-7; David Althoen, 'Natione Polonus and the *Naród Szlachecki*: Two Myths of National Identity and Noble Solidarity', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 52/4 (2003), 475-508.
14. Johan Huizinga, 'Patriotism and Nationalism in European History' (1940), in his *Men and Ideas* (London: Eyre, 1960), 106-7.
15. *Ibid.*, 103-5.
16. Louis Loomis, 'Nationality at the Council of Constance: An Anglo-French Dispute', in S. Thrupp (ed.), *Change in Medieval Society* (New York: Appleton, 1964), 279-96, quotation from 291, citing Herman von der Hardt, *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium* (Frankfurt: Chr. Genschius, 1700), vol. v, 92.
17. Thrupp (ed.), *Change in Medieval Society*, 293.
18. While Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and Politics of Nationalities* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1977), 7, includes the Dutch in the 'old nations' category, I distinguish them from it in the senses mentioned in the text above.



## 2 Vanishing Primordialism

Literature, History and the Public

*Andrew Hadfield*

A Nation is moral – virtuous – vigorous – while it is engaged in realizing its grand objects, and defends its work against external violence during the process of giving to its purposes an objective existence. The contradiction between its potential, subjective being – its inner aim and life – and its *actual* being is removed; it has attained full reality, has itself objectively present to it. But this having been attained, the activity displayed by the Spirit of the people in question is no longer needed; it has its desire. The Nation can still accomplish much in war and peace at home and abroad; but the living substantial soul itself may be said to have ceased its activity. The essential, supreme interest has consequently vanished from its life, for interest is present only where there is opposition. The nation lives the same kind of life as the individual when passing from maturity to old age – in the enjoyment of itself – in the satisfaction of being exactly what it desired and was able to attain ... In order that a truly universal interest may arise, the Spirit of a People must advance to the adoption of some new purpose; but whence can this new purpose originate? It would be a higher, more comprehensive conception of itself – a transcending of its principle – but this very act would involve a principle of a new order, a new National Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Nations are central to Hegel's understanding of history. For Hegel, writing in 1821-31, in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, nations are individual and distinct entities expressing the particular spirit of a particular people. This spirit needs to be realised so a people will struggle to activate their spirit and to manifest it in a concrete manner. For Hegel it is the process that matters: the nation is at its most vigorous and distinct when it is working to establish its true identity. Once the nation has come into existence it starts to grow, wane and even die. Of course, established nations still have much to offer and do not just disappear once they have appeared. They can, as Hegel's argument continues, still accomplish much in war and peace, conflict and resolution, through their interaction with other nations.

It is easy to see why Hegel's philosophy appealed to the idea of youth, real and abstract, and why it had such a decisive influence on the formation of



nations in the first half of the nineteenth century, in particular those that wanted to throw off the shackles of the past and liberate themselves from oppression and so recast their national spirit in terms of Hegel's ideals of ever greater freedom.<sup>2</sup> Nations expressed the spirit of their people when they were establishing themselves, when they were struggling to appear in their ideal form. Hegel is clear that nations need opposition and that they cannot and do not exist as isolated entities. Therefore there will be a second phase of nation-building once the nation has come into being and liberated itself from older political and social formations, the advancement to a new spirit of nationhood at a higher level when nations express a more comprehensive conception of themselves.

Hegel never really explains how this second phase might take place, as his subject is the history of nations up to the time that he was writing and the ways in which they have developed so far. It is important for us to note that he sees national histories as matters of endless process, that a nation can never really come to rest. Once it has obtained its spirit it needs to move on to another more complete manifestation of its identity. Put another way, we must surely assume that for Hegel the nation never really obtains a complete identity, for once it achieves this, it starts to die unless it moves on to a higher state and a more complete version of itself. Therefore, the nation never really exists, certainly not as a complete form: as soon as that final state threatens to appear the nation starts to die and needs to change.

The concomitant aspect of Hegel's philosophical assumptions about the nature and history of nations is that nations have always existed. Nations which do not exist yet are waiting to appear and to be activated by the spirit of their people. For Hegel there are four particular manifestations of nations and identities: the Oriental World; the Greek World; the Roman World; and the German World, i.e. the three most significant national identities of the ancient world and the pre-eminent one of the modern world. The point is important and will assume a greater significance if we think about the distinction between nations and nationalism. Nationalism postdates the existence of the nation in an obviously logical manner, as nationalism can only exist as a phenomenon when there is the model of the nation to copy.

## Debates

Studies of nationalism have been dominated by modernism, the argument that nations emerged with the birth of modernity. Nations are a post-Enlightenment development according to this argument, requiring

secularism, industrialisation, mass communications and popular politics in order to appear.<sup>3</sup> In the past decade this argument has come ever more heavily under fire from a series of studies that have argued that nations have a much longer history than has invariably been assumed, claiming that many of the features that are thought to be unique to modern nations can be found in much earlier socio-political formations.<sup>4</sup> In particular such studies have claimed that modernist conceptions of the nation and nationalism have underplayed the significance of ethnicity in constructing national forms, which has led to a distorted belief that political factors matter more than notions of shared identity and common kinship. Equally, if not more, importantly, they have claimed that factors which unite modern people within nations – shared rituals, public symbols, common interests – can be found in many premodern states. For Caspar Hirschi it was the attempt of the Holy Roman Empire to impose order on Europe that led to the possibility of nationalism in the wake of the Council of Constance (1414-18). The failure of the council led to the growth of ideas of nationhood based on a shared conception of national honour: 'Now, *natio* came to mean a political, cultural and linguistic community, inhabiting a territory of its own and sharing an exclusive honour among its members.'<sup>5</sup> For Azar Gat there is often little point in separating ethnic and national identity because 'shared ethnicity is the substratum of nations'.<sup>6</sup> Such corrections are important, although there is a risk – more apparent with Gat's analysis than Hirschi's – that distinctions between nations, nationalism and ethnicity will collapse.

It is obvious that nations have not existed in the same form throughout their histories: they have not always had the same boundaries or the same inhabitants and it surely has not escaped anyone's attention that some boundaries look rather odd and unnatural on the map, especially those of nations that used to be colonies. It is obvious that we need a historicised understanding of nations, which is why virtually all historians of national identity and nationalism see themselves as historicists. If the dominant school of the study of nationalism has been that of the modernists, it needs to be acknowledged that many are perennialists who argue that nations may have existed for a long time but not always in the same form. Primordialists, who argue that nations are 'timeless phenomena', usually fall into the category of nationalists proper rather than students of nationalism.<sup>7</sup>

It is a useful exercise to turn the basic question on its head. Instead of asking when nations appear, should we not ask: can we imagine a time when nations did not exist? Were people ever able to think in a way that has no relationship to national identity? What would it mean not to have a national identity? It is one of the great clichés of modern history that internationalist

and socialist thought has invariably been defeated by national sentiment and that, in the end, the imagined community of the nation is more powerful than that of a united class or transnational group, as the history of the First World War demonstrates: 'A Frenchman or a German was prepared to kill or be killed for Alsace-Lorraine, whose possession appeared to have no practical bearing on his daily life.'<sup>8</sup> Was there a time when this was not the case? Did people once imagine themselves in ways that were not based on a collective national identity or something like it? In the Middle Ages did people think of themselves as members of a Latin Christendom, a united church? Or did they imagine that dynastic allegiance was more significant in constructing identity than being part of a national group?

However far back we wish to push notions of national identity it is clear that the modernist argument has to be revised, certainly with regard to Europe. In addition to Hirschi's study of the Holy Roman Empire we need to consider the important work by Ardis Butterfield on Anglo-French identity during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), which concludes that there was indeed a clear understanding of national identity in Europe in this period.<sup>9</sup> Ideas of identity in the later Middle Ages were not exactly the same as ours and an understanding of the self depended on ideas of the nation as race as much as territory, so overlapping and intertwined were the people, dynasties and territories of the English and the French, a conclusion that supports Gat's argument that thinking about nations involves balancing ethnic, dynastic and political factors. But, however we read the evidence, there was never a doubt that England and France, and the English and the French, existed and were different and that these distinctions could be identified and understood and that people belonged somewhere on one side or the other.

It is hard to imagine a life without national identity and this understanding should be fundamental to our discussion of nations and nationalism. Hegel realised this, which is why his analysis is so fraught and qualified, and why he can only ever envisage nations existing in relation to other nations. At no point does his history imagine a time in which nations did not exist. It is therefore problematic to pit historicists who are basically right against perennialists (and even primordialists), who naively deny the contingent and complicated nature of historical progress. On the contrary, it is the historicists who can seem, paradoxically, ahistorical, in imagining that most history is the history before the history of nations and nationalism, and who therefore want to place an undue emphasis on a short period leading up to the present. Accepting that we have always had a sense of national identity enables us to write a much more flexible and unburdened history

of nations because we then liberate ourselves from a commitment to the Scylla and Charybdis of assuming either that nations remain the same or that they are a modern invention, the latter being a circular argument which assumes that nations are modern because they define modernity. The key point is not the precise nature of one's national identity, but the fact that one has one in the first place. Nations are defined and imagined, then redefined and reimagined and they are not always the same nation at the beginning or the end of that process or for everyone doing the imagining. This does not make them any less real, only more contested. As soon as a nation is established alongside other nations against which it is defined the possibility of opposition and argument has to exist, a reality that is implicit in Hegel's analysis of the history of nations, which can never be static.

If certain groups wish to define the nation's character in terms of its indigenous history isolated from the rest of the world, others will seek to think of its debt to other nations, or its need to be indebted to other nations if it is to advance. Virgil's description of the Britons '*toto divisos orbe Britannos*' ('wholly sundered from the world') can be read in terms of national identities.<sup>10</sup> The Britons are at the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire, barbarians who are in urgent need of Roman civilisation. Exile for Tityrus and Meliboeus is a reminder too that in order to progress Rome had to expand and change, however painful that might seem at the time. A division exists between wanting to remain in the environs of Rome and supporting the protection and expansion of the eternal city. After the Reformation the lines were read as an affirmation of British purity free from the tyrannical influence of Rome, and a sign of *translatio imperii*, the transfer of power from the Catholic south to the Protestant north. Equally importantly they opened up a space so that two forms of British identity could be seen to exist in conflict: those who wanted a nation free from the civilising influence of Rome and those who felt that the nation had to learn from the imperial centre.<sup>11</sup>

## Nations and Nationalism

If national identity has a long history, does it follow that nationalism, the belief that attachment to and identification with a nation is a good thing that needs to be encouraged, has too? Must national identity and nationalism go hand in hand? What links the two is, as Hirschi suggests, a series of symbols, tokens and manifestations of a shared identity: coins, images, flags, banners, objects, and so on. Equally significant is the existence of

institutions which serve to connect the disparate elements of the nation: the monarchy, political fora, law courts, schools and universities, and the church. It is possible – but difficult – to have a nation that does not have a public sphere. Even the most authoritarian of nations have an opposition, although it may not be obvious or visible; more democratic countries and states make that opposition part of their existence and character through the encouragement or toleration of a public culture. Once a nation exists in the imagination it can be represented, copied and its character and nature disputed: the nation, debate and contested identity are intimately linked.

There has been vigorous debate about the nature and character of the public sphere – when it first appeared, what exactly it is and how far it has reached and can reach. Jürgen Habermas argued that the public sphere appeared in the eighteenth century with the development of a public culture based on newspapers, coffee houses and far greater participation by a large section of the public in the political and intellectual life of the European nation in question.<sup>12</sup> For Habermas, the crucial point is that the public sphere creates the possibility of rational and reasoned debate, of ideas being tested, challenged, refuted, accepted and refined through open debate, an ideal form of communicative action even if breached more than honoured. The idea of the public sphere is surely central to our understanding of the emergence of the nation as a model of existence that can be defined and copied to establish the basic unit of human society. As with a historicist understanding of the emergence of modernity and the nation, the public sphere, according to Habermas, first appears in the eighteenth century, providing us with a neat and satisfying model of the establishment of the modern world. The Enlightenment ushers in reason and modernity, clearing the way for the world we recognise. While one might have a nation without a public sphere – although examples are surely rare (contemporary North Korea? Thirteenth-century Mongolia?) – it is not easy to imagine a public sphere that does not belong to a nation.

However, even gentle intellectual pressure causes this neat model of nations, public and modernity, to fall apart at the seams. Just as the modern emergence of the nation has been challenged by a variety of thinkers, so has Habermas's assumption that the public sphere first appeared in the eighteenth century. Peter Lake and Michael Questier have argued that the vigorously contested debates over religion in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century constitute rational, public exchanges of exactly the sort that Habermas argued appeared rather later.<sup>13</sup> Laudians adopted an Armenian understanding of the primacy of free will and an emphasis on ceremony and spectacle in church services to counter the

prevailing Calvinist culture of their opponents who were held together as much by their anti-Catholicism as more positive modes of belief. Their arguments before war between crown and people erupted in 1642 were carried out in print as well as in person and played a significant role in defining the nature of England's political identity. Such analysis surely makes sense. Then we have to ask: was England a unique nation in Europe, a model that established itself for others to copy later, with its relatively strong parliament, independent judiciary, centralised bureaucracy and infrastructure of local government, enabling a public sphere to develop? Or was its development part of a more general process of change? Either way, we are disrupting the neat model of nation/public/modernity and showing that ideas of the public and the nation predate the Enlightenment.

But we can put even more pressure on the assumed timescale of progress. If debates about religion in print define the nature of the public sphere, as Lake and Questier suggest, then shouldn't we be looking more closely at the emergence of the printing press as a significant development in defining nation and public? After all, there is a long-established but now somewhat obscured tradition of thinking about national identity, perhaps most obviously associated with Hans Kohn (1891-1971) in his book *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944). Kohn's role in thinking about national identity and nationalism was largely obscured by the modernists but he has recently been paid more of his dues with the return of arguments that date the nation is a pre-Enlightenment phenomenon.<sup>14</sup>

Kohn places great emphasis on the development of vernacular traditions in defining national identities, particularly in the wake of the Reformation with the need to translate the Bible into different languages.<sup>15</sup> Kohn shows how the acquisition of the printing press and the possibility of debates taking place in public through books which, written in a particular language, facilitate the development of a public sphere and a national identity. With the emergence of the possibility of texts circulating around an anonymous series of readers who identify with the debates taking place among a nebulously defined group of people who have access to these texts we have an understanding of a public and, perhaps, a nation.<sup>16</sup> Reading the Bible in English outside the control of the church clearly had far-reaching effects that could not be confined to confessional allegiance alone.

The impact of the development of the printing press as a means of producing cheap, easily reproducible texts that could then reach a wide audience has long been recognised. The technological determinist assumptions of Walter Ong led to his argument that a healthy culture of lively oral debate had been replaced by a more limiting culture based on the visual which demanded an

individual response from an isolated reader.<sup>17</sup> The international Latin culture of the late Middle Ages gave way to the particular culture of specific nations with their own languages, making international discourse and interaction much more difficult. Ong's argument is a reversal of the familiar assumption that modernity equals progress, but it shares an identical teleology. Ong's mentor and friend, Marshall McLuhan, was perhaps even more far-reaching in his analysis of the impact of print as a fundamentally transformational moment in world history, with the claim that the Guttenberg Galaxy inaugurated a technological change that revolutionised modes of perception and cognition.<sup>18</sup> If the possibility of rational argument and debate is intimately linked to the rise of the public and the nation then we need to think more about the nature of communication, the mediums in which communication takes place and the cognitive effects of a transformation of communicative systems. Furthermore, if print is a crucial factor in the development or transformation of the nation then we need to look more closely at the variety of print culture and its potential significance. Before widespread emancipation and suffrage – even at the restricted levels of the eighteenth century – political debate took place in a variety of forms other than the most obvious channels. We need to look at literature, religious writing, art, popular culture, and so on, and not just the most obvious places, political and philosophical writing. Put another way, we will not understand the history of political ideas if we simply concentrate on political writing and few cases demonstrate this truth more forcefully than the history of nations and nationalism.

Literature does not reflect debates about the nation and national identity: it invariably predicts and establishes them in periods before the creation of political institutions that have defined the contours of nations. Literature and literary traditions exist alongside the symbolic forms and objects that define a nation: literary texts establish the possibility of a nation through the debates they articulate. In creating the imagined political form they pave the way for nationalism. There are surely different ages of nationalism and the central problem with the modernist argument is not that it does not describe a significant phenomenon – it would be hard to dispute that many modern nations exist in the form that they do because they were created by the wave of nation-building in the wake of the French Revolution, copying the model of the French Republic, as David Bell has argued.<sup>19</sup> The problem is that the modernist argument is invariably exclusive: but, as with so many phenomena, the history of nationalism is uneven. Not only are there various waves of nation-building and nationalism, so that there is no reason why Hirschi and Bell cannot be both right in outlining very different histories of nations and nationalism.



The history of English identity and English nationalism can be variously dated. For Krishan Kumar Englishness is a relatively recent phenomenon created by the expansion of the British Empire and the need for the English to define themselves in terms of their spectacular success in establishing overseas territories and dominating the rest of the British Isles. Although there was an English national identity before the end of the nineteenth century there was no English nationalism 'because there was no need for it'.<sup>20</sup> It is an ingenious and persuasive argument in many ways but it assumes a monolithic history that does not accurately describe the complex and uneven history of nations and nationalism. For Azar Gat the issue is even more straightforward. The success of the Anglo-Saxons in establishing a united kingdom with a spoken and written language relatively soon after they arrived in the Britain created England and Englishness.<sup>21</sup>

### English National Identity and Literature in the Seventeenth Century

In the rest of this chapter I want to look at a particular moment in the history of English writing in order to test my understanding of the relationship between the nation, nationalism, literature and the public sphere. I will explore two major early-seventeenth-century literary texts that seek to establish an understanding of the relationship between land and people that define a nation: Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and Sir John Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, poems that can be defined as chorographical, as they use the newly developed techniques of accurate mapping and printed reproduction to represent England and establish a voice that speaks for the nation. In doing so they articulate and assume a public readership that they can address which, whether they are persuaded by the arguments of the text, or agree with its sentiments, constitute the nation. Both poems demonstrate a desire to address a wider national public and articulate an understanding of the nation as a geographical entity in which there is an intimate relationship between the land and the people who inhabit it. The enterprise cannot be seen as an epistemological break with the past, but it does depend on the advent of new technologies that made it possible, works of art in an age of mechanical reproduction. Once again, the history of a nation can be seen to exist in terms of particular developments that change what it is – new technologies, institutions, external relations – not an epistemic transformation that signals its origin.



Michael Drayton's monumental *Poly-Olbion* (1612, 1622) is finally enjoying something of a revival as a work that foresees subsequent interest in nature poetry and ecology.<sup>22</sup> Drayton's intemperate outburst at his ungrateful readers for not buying enough copies of the first edition of his poem in the preface to the second edition represents his understanding that his relationship with his readers was in printed form, and, significantly, that they had failed in their social responsibility by not seeing the importance of his work. Drayton addresses his rather sulky preface 'To any that will read it' and complains that his poem has been met with 'barbarous Ignorance' by non-readers who are letting themselves and future generations down by not reading his work with the care and attention it deserves:

And some of outlandish, unnaturall English, (I know not how otherwise to expresse them) sticke not to say, that there is nothing in this Island worthy studying for, and take a great pride to bee ignorant in any thing thereof, for these, since they delight in their folly, I wish it may be hereditary from them to their posteritie, that their children may bee beg'd for Fooles to the fift Generation, until it may be beyond the memory of man to know that there was ever any other of their Families.<sup>23</sup>

Drayton's anger points backwards and forwards, at the foolish readers who are neglecting the past; failing to understand the present; and not taking proper care of the future because they believe that there is nothing worth knowing about the island in which they live. In keeping their eyes shut they are severing their relationship to their nation, which is why they are cursed. Drayton's fury is not simply that of a writer whose nose is put out of joint because his *magnum opus* has not been properly appreciated. It is also that of a man who believes that he is witnessing a catastrophic failure to understand an urgent and pressing problem, a myopia that severs the people from the land.

Jean Brink has suggested that 'the title *Poly-Olbion* puns on "Poly" (very or much) and "Olbion" as Albion (England) and Greek (happy or fortunate)'. Drayton probably imagined his work as an Anglocentric enterprise, never seriously intending to carry out his stated plan of describing Scotland (Wales was included but then it had been annexed by England in 1535).<sup>24</sup> The poem with the songs each representing a separate English county, accompanied by learned notes by the historian John Selden (1584-1654) – often at odds with the poems – seeks to provide a comprehensive survey of the topographical features of rural England.<sup>25</sup> The poem idealises

England, but uses the harmonious relationship between land and people that it represents as a means of criticising the failings of the present and warning that if such comments are ignored the consequences will be disastrous.

Drayton fashions himself as an oppositional poet, using his survey of the land to criticise the central authority of the monarch, imagining his poem as an alternative to a royal progress. The twenty-second song follows the progress of the Great River Ouse from Bedford to the Wash. The argument heading the song warns readers that 'she the Civil Wars should chant', and towards the end of the song there is a list of the bitter rebellions that the river has witnessed:

As for the *Black-Smith's* Rout, who did together rise,  
 Encamping on *Blackheath*, t'annul the subsidies  
 By Parliament then given, or that of *Cornwall* call'd  
 Inclosures to cast down, which overmuch enthralld  
 The subject: or proud *Kets*, who with the same pretence  
 In *Norfolke* rais'd such stirs, as but with great expense  
 Of blood was not appeas'd; or that begun in *Lent*  
 By *Wyat* and his friends, the marriage to prevent,  
 That *Mary* did intend with *Philip* King of *Spain*[.]<sup>26</sup>

The narrator dismisses these rebellions as 'riots' (line 1600), but it is clear from the song that they were far too important to caricature in such a cavalier manner and that Drayton realised their significance. We have in rapid succession reminders of the Cornish Prayer Book Rebellion (1549); Kett's Rebellion (1549); and Wyatt's Rebellion (1554), a reminder that England in the aftermath of the Reformation was a divided and dangerous land.<sup>27</sup> For Drayton the natural features of the landscape if read carefully and correctly will tell this history, one of the principal functions of his long chorographic work.

Drayton shows how rivers tell stories, good and bad, having a solitary weeping nymph lamenting the sad fate of England:

*Waybridge* a neighbouring Nymph, the only remnant left  
 Of all that Forest-kind, by Time's injurious theft  
 Of all that tract destroy'd, with wood which did abound  
 And former times had seen the goodliest Forest-ground,  
 This Island ever had: but she so left alone,  
 The ruin of her kind, and no man to bemoan (lines 1602-8).

And notes the destruction of the ancient English forests:

O Flood [i.e. river] in happy plight, which to this time remain'st,  
 As still along in state to *Neptune's* Court thou strain'st,  
 Revive thee with the thought of those forepasséd hours,  
 When the rough Wood-gods kept, in their delightful bowers,  
 On thy embroidered banks, when now this Country fill'd,  
 With villages, and by the labouring plowman till'd,  
 Was Forest, where the fir, arid spreading poplar grew.  
 O let me yet the thought of those past times renew,  
 When as that woody kind, in our umbrageous wild,  
 Whence every living thing save only they exil'd,  
 In this world of waste, the sovereign empire sway'd (lines 1611-21).

The nymph shows us that the advent of civilisation exacts a heavy price. The river remains the same – telling its tales of human conflict and fickleness – but the forest is cut down to make way for agriculture and human inhabitation and the ‘rough Wood-gods’ disappear. What might seem like progress is not an unqualified good as the trees are felled and nature is forced to retreat. Bringing everything into the light and removing the dark forest spaces means that we lose things too, the creatures inhabiting the ‘umbrageous wild’ who are now forced away or killed off. The word ‘waste’ has a heavy significance in this context, invariably referring to land that was not properly used.<sup>28</sup> For the nymph, it is civilisation that is guilty of wasting the land, destroying natural resources such as forests in order to establish ploughed fields. Furthermore, the ambiguous and complicated last sentence can be read to mean that she desires a return to a state in which the wood creatures the ‘sovereign empire sway’d’. We do not have to accept the wood-nymph’s voice and might regard her as a deluded and nostalgic reactionary. However we read her sentiments we have to acknowledge that England contains diverse and often conflicting voices. Just as the river flows eternally but reminds the literate observer of the changes that it has witnessed and sometimes helped cause, so does the wood-nymph show us that there are those eager to resist the march of progress and preserve the ancient ways that are in danger of being lost.

Drayton’s landscape tells different, conflicting stories, reminding observers of the diverse nature of English history and the long-standing conflict between monarch, the political institutions and the people they represented, as well as the clash of nature and civilisation. The poem explicitly acknowledges that a nation is never simply unified and that a complicated political entity with a public sphere will contain different voices, competing,

conflicting and overlapping, just as it contains different histories that specific interest groups will elaborate and defend. The land will speak to its inhabitants if they listen to it but will not always tell the same story.<sup>29</sup>

After *Poly-Olbion* came Sir John Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, first published in 1642 and famous as the originator of 'local poetry'.<sup>30</sup> Denham (1614/5-1669) represents himself looking out from his estates at Cooper's Hill, Egham, in Surrey and surveying the English landscape on the eve of the English Civil War. Denham looks East to Windsor and London, then over the Thames Valley, contrasting the bustle of the city to life in the countryside. Denham's first glance towards London suggests that he is suspicious of the powerful growth of the capital:

I see the City in a thicker cloud  
Of businesse, then of smoake, where Men like Ants  
Toyle to prevent imaginarie wants;  
Yet all in vaine, increasing with their store,  
Their vast desires, but make their wants the more.<sup>31</sup>

London, unlike the ideal of balanced life on a country estate, is trapped in a destructive cycle of appetites that require satisfying. Men and women work ever harder to slake their desires not realising that the real solution is equilibrium rather than endless work. The comparison between men and ants is deliberately misleading. Ants, like the ant in the fable of the ant and the grasshopper, work to ensure a secure future not to indulge their vices, a significant detail in a poem which makes a number of references to Aesop's fables. Here, people work hard but only to produce things that no one really needs. This unstable situation is yet another cause of the present crisis and has fuelled the dissatisfaction that leaves the country on the verge of civil war.

Just as the people lack a sense of proportion, so it seems does the seat of kings. Denham's narrator looks over to Windsor Castle, where balance seems rather precarious and what sounds like praise of regal approachability can either seem ironic – given Charles's famous aloofness – or a worried acknowledgement that the monarchy is under threat:

With such an easie, and unforc'd Ascent,  
*Windsor* her gentle bosome doth present,  
Where no stupendous Cliffe, no threatening heights  
Accesse deny, no horrid steepe affreights,  
But such a Rise, as doth at once invite  
A pleasure, and a reverence from the sight (lines 55-60).

A monarch with the human touch is to be welcomed in most circumstances but here we have one whose accessibility suggests a lack of planning, a pointed contrast to the overly industrious ants. The enjoyment that a viewer might take from the prospect of the castle is not without its pain. Windsor invites pleasure, which suggests that it is not properly protected and so does not actually seem to be a castle which might be required in the event of civil war. The lines also hint that those who enter the castle may be rather overly dedicated to the pleasures which it invites, enjoying themselves when they should be working hard on behalf of the nation. The balance of the city and the monarchy reads more like a parody of good order than proper, stable equilibrium, an impression reinforced by the subsequent lines on the castle's appearance:

So *Windsor*, humble in it selfe, seems proud,  
 To be the Base of that Majesticke load,  
 Than which no hill a nobler burthen beares,  
 But *Atlas* onely, that supports the spheres,  
 Nature this mount so fitly did advance,  
 We might conclude, that nothing is by chance  
 So plac't, as if she did on purpose raise  
 The Hill, to rob the builder of his praise (lines 65-72).

These lines are laden with ambiguities and ironies. Windsor seems humble to be the bearer of the seat of kings, something which does not necessarily reflect well on the town and the castle. If it is too humble then it ought to be made more regal or surrender its position: majesty should inspire awe and reverence if it is to function properly, not seem ordinary and limited, which undermines the status and nature of monarchs. The hill that bears the castle seems like Atlas, supporting the world on his shoulders. Again, such words look like praise but can also be read as a reflection on the burdens that monarchy will have to bear in the near future as the country's order and infrastructure dissolve. Nature did not, of course, 'advance' the mount for the castle but it was chosen by English monarchs and, if a reader *might* conclude that nothing is left to chance they might also conclude that it has been, or if it is a plan, then it does not look like a sensible one in 1642. And who should we think of as the builder, another crucially ambiguous term? The architect? Or the monarch? If the castle is badly designed and in an inappropriate place is that the fault of the person who designed the castle or the person who commissioned it? However we read this description, Denham suggests that the crown needs to think more carefully about its

role and position. Like Drayton's rivers Denham's buildings tell a story. Asking who can be seen as the castle's designer, Denham's narrator wonders

To whom this Ile  
Must owe the glory of so brave a Pile,  
Whether to *Caesar, Albanact, or Brute*,  
The British *Arthur*, or the Danish *Knute* (lines 81-4).

The five rulers cited here include three invaders; Julius Caesar, Brutus (the legendary founder of Britain) and Cnut; one monarch who killed himself as a result of invasion, Albanactus, Brutus's son; and one king, Arthur, who rose to prominence fighting off invaders, but whose glorious empire ended with bloody civil war. The lessons are all there for Charles to read.

As the narrator surveys the Thames Valley we are then given more potent examples of bad, overreaching kingship. Spying a ruined chapel on a hill, he condemns Henry VIII's behaviour in suppressing the monasteries, relating the disasters of the past to his fears for England's future:

Till in the common fate,  
The neighbouring Abbey fell, (may no such storme  
Fall on our times, where ruine must reforme)  
Tell me (my Muse) what monstrous dire offence?  
What crime could any Christian King incense  
To such a rage? wast Luxurie or Lust?  
Was he so temperate, so chast, so just?  
Were these their crimes; they were his owne, much more  
But they (alas) were rich, and he was poore;  
And having spent the treasures of his Crowne,  
Condemns their Luxurie, to feed his owne (lines 148-58).

The condemnation of Henry VIII's motives for inaugurating the English Reformation are explicit: he is represented as a tyrant who was inspired by the basest desires, lust for Anne Boleyn and greed, having squandered his funds (presumably Denham is referring to Henry's gargantuan spending on foreign wars). The ruin serves as a reminder of Henry's crimes inscribed in the landscape, and, even though we cannot see Chertsey Abbey, the narrator knows enough from what he sees and has read of English history to be reminded of its fate.<sup>32</sup> Charles is reminded of the terrible destruction that his predecessor caused, the effects of which can be still be seen well over a hundred years later, and implicitly advised to seek a compromise that

will preserve the nation's traditions. Denham is not necessarily declaring an allegiance to Catholicism in lamenting the overthrow of the medieval church. Rather, he is surveying the landscape to advise a ruler how best to govern his nation and reminding him what can happen if compromise is not reached. The monarch should know that he must not 'spoyle, / The Mowers hopes, nor mocke the Plough-mans toyle' (lines 199-200), and that 'a wise King first settles fruitfull peace / In his owne Realmes' (lines 205-6) before embarking on expansionist wars to enrich his subjects.

*Cooper's Hill* ends with a long description of a stag hunt which the speaker has seen, concluding with Charles slaying the noble beast 'glad, and proud to dye' (line 298). We are immediately reminded that the hunt took place in Runymede water-meadow where King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta and so reluctantly ensure the liberty of his subjects. Charles, in the narrator's eyes, is surely a more suitable monarch than John or Henry VIII, or the poem could not have any serious purpose with its hope for compromise to ensure continuity. Even so, he needs to know that his rights as a monarch have to be limited and circumscribed, just as the demands of his subjects need to be kept within reasonable grounds. The poem ends with a plea that the rule of law will prevail: 'And may that Law, which teaches Kings to sway / Their Scepters, teach their Subjects to obey' (lines 353-4). In making this moderate – but eventually futile – request, Denham is seeking to preserve the delicate balance of people and the environment, recognising that this can only be achieved through compromise and political engagement.

## Concluding Remarks

Both poems seek to articulate an understanding of the nation. Each author is acutely aware of the contentious and confrontational nature of his writing, not simply because not every reader will agree with their analysis and diagnosis of the ills of the nation and the possibilities for their remedy, but because each poem acknowledges, represents and foregrounds conflict and argument. How, then, should we read them? They are both works made possible by the rise of technological changes, printing which enabled Drayton and Denham to write for wide publics which could be thought to constitute the nation, and the developments in surveying and mapping which brought an understanding of the nation into sharper focus.<sup>33</sup> They were both writing at a moment of acute awareness of the nation: Drayton lived through the transformation of the monarchy which saw James VI of Scotland reign as

King of Britain after Elizabeth, the last queen of England, and Denham was acutely conscious that civil war was imminent.

Drayton and Denham had a clear understanding that England was a nation that could be mapped, circumscribed, represented and reproduced, its local features combining to produce a whole. They also realised that the identities of English people differed and conflicted and that, if the English had a Hegelian national spirit, it was not really clear what it was. Furthermore, they understood that in representing a nation one participated in the production of a public sphere through that very act and that an argument was likely to result. Neither is confident that their understanding of what the nation is or should be will survive the changes that are about to happen. Are such works nationalistic? On the one hand it would be stretching a definition to breaking point to claim that they are; on the other hand, if we ignore what such literary works do, conscious of their role in a national tradition and eager to represent the nation and its people using the latest means, from a discourse of nationalism we remove one of the central elements of nationalist thinking and risk imagining a tradition emerging out of nothing.

## Notes

1. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 2004), 74-5. Originally published in 1837. This essay was written while I was a visiting fellow at All Souls College, Oxford (Hilary term, 2015). I am grateful to the warden and the fellows for electing me and for their intellectual generosity while I was at the college.
2. Shlomo Avineri, 'Hegel and Nationalism', *The Review of Politics* 24 (1962), 461-84; Lawrence S. Stepelevich (ed.), *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).
3. The most significant studies are Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, rev. ed., 1991). For a modernist argument in an English/British context, see Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).
4. See, in particular, Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History From Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012); Azar Gat with Alexander Yakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013).



5. Hirschi, *Origins*, 88.
6. Gat, *Nations*, 20.
7. 'The Nationalism Project' ([www.nationalismproject.org/what/Bodypage.html](http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/Bodypage.html)) (accessed 18 March 2015).
8. Gat, *Nations*, 40.
9. Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); 'Nationhood', in Steve Ellis (ed.), *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 50-65.
10. Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H. R. Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Eclogue I, line 66.
11. The concept was of particular importance for John Milton, author of a Protestant epic in *Paradise Lost*: see Anne-Julia Zwierlein, *Majestick Milton: British Imperial Expansion and Transformations of Paradise Lost, 1667-1837* (Berlin: Verlag, 2001).
12. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
13. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context', *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 587-627. See also Peter Lake and Steven Pinkus (eds.), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
14. Hirschi, *Origins*, 5; Gat, *Nations*, 8-9, *passim*; Kumar, *Making*, 124-5.
15. Hans Kohn, *The Idea Of Nationalism: A Study In Its Origins And Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944).
16. Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).
17. Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).
18. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
19. David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
20. Kumar, *Making*, 178.
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### 3      **Revolutionary France and the Origins of Nationalism**

An Old Problem Revisited

*David A. Bell*

Like many people, I first became interested in nationalism in the 1980s. It was a moment when we seemed to be on the brink of a new 'springtime of nations'. Names that seemed to have vanished from the map forever as sovereign entities – Latvia, Serbia, Lombardy, Flanders – seemed to be clamoring for national rebirth. Journalists were finding it impossible to resist the seductive, if misleading, image that with the thawing of the Cold War, deeply-buried national passions were again germinating in long-frozen soil. By the late 1990s, with the map of Europe now changed, and nationalism apparently producing a bloody harvest in far too many locations, I decided to write a book about how the phenomenon had arisen in France, and the implications of the French case for other countries.<sup>1</sup>

Looking back on that period today, it has become clear that in some important ways, this new springtime of nations was more of a false dawn. For one thing, it now seems apparent that the decades since the end of the Cold War have been at least as deeply marked by globalisation, and the growth of many different sorts of transnational bonds and contacts and movements, as by nationalism. In many cases, somewhat paradoxically, nationalism has only flourished *because* of these new supra-national connections. The robust national movements in Scotland and Catalonia, for instance, only developed in the way they did because of the assumption that as small independent nations they would find a place in the European Union. In the former eastern bloc, no sooner did nationalist movements achieve their goals, than the nations in question eagerly petitioned to surrender important parts of their national sovereignty to the European Union, while also applying to join NATO. It has also become clear that in an age where states have far greater responsibilities towards their citizens than they once did, the acquisition of territory and population, however much it may serve a nationalist goal, can also amount to a mixed blessing, or indeed to no blessing at all. There are now some territories in Europe that might be defined as, at least in some senses, nationally unwanted. For instance, no French government of late has shown much desire to exploit

renewed ethnic strife in Belgium so as to fulfill the dreams of Louis XIV and annex Wallonia – not when it means having to pay welfare to the region's unemployed workers, and to rebuild its infrastructure. A century ago, it would have seemed absurd for Romania not to desire reunion with a Moldova freed from Russian control, but precious few Romanians now make this annexation a priority. Europeans know just how great a price West Germany paid to absorb East Germany, and no other European state has anything approaching the resources of Germany. Finally, it has become clear that nationalism did not even drive the violence of the 1990s as much as at first seemed to be the case. If we look at the long chain of conflicts that broke out after the collapse of communism, it has become painfully apparent that the more important pretext for large-scale violence was not nationalism, but religion. Nearly all of these conflicts – from Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabagh to Bosnia and Kosovo, took place along the long and porous borders of Islam.

Historical scholarship has of course responded to these changes. The most important historiographical shift of the past quarter-century has been the set of 'turns' variously described as global, imperial, transnational, colonial or post-colonial.<sup>2</sup> The historians associated with them certainly recognise the power of nationalism, but they see it as one particular force operating in a larger and more complex field, and often trumped by other forces. Back in the 1980s and 90s, it would have seemed eminently reasonable to most historians to have labelled the nation-state the most important political form in nineteenth-century Europe. Today, more historians would almost certainly give that honour to globe-spanning empires. A book such Frederick Cooper's *Citizenship between Empire and Nation* is just one prominent example of work arguing that the rise of the national form to global dominance occurred later, and in far more contingent a manner than historians have generally recognised.<sup>3</sup> In *The Cult of the Nation*, I emphasised the development, in revolutionary France, of a French republican nationalism that took as its object the French nation-state. Consider, however, how a recent historian of empire, Gary Wilder, has described the same subject: 'Revolutionary republicanism and republican universalism must be dissociated from French metropolitan territory and ethnicity [... as they] were formed on an imperial scale within an Atlantic system ... and we can understand these processes only if we recognise republican France as an imperial formation rather than a national state'.<sup>4</sup> One can argue, as I have done, that this statement goes too far.<sup>5</sup> Still, if I were to rewrite *The Cult of the Nation* today, I would give the French colonies, and France's place within various Atlantic systems, a far more prominent place.

These changes, both in the world at large and within historical scholarship, have driven home the point that a great deal of earlier writing on the history of nationalism – including, *mea culpa*, my own book – was unduly teleological. In other words, it took nationalism as a necessary constituent element, a *sine qua non*, of modernity, and so treated the development of forms of national identification in the early modern period as necessary steps on the road to this modernity. The single most flagrant example of this tendency was probably the sociologist Liah Greenfeld's influential 1993 book *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*.<sup>6</sup> But nearly all of the sociological literature of the late twentieth century that explored the history of nationalism made the same basic assumption to one extent or another. Ernst Gellner, most obviously, labelled modernity 'the age of nationalism'.<sup>7</sup> The schools of analysis which Anthony Smith has called 'perennialist' and 'primordialist' have done more to escape the charge of teleology.<sup>8</sup> But they too generally ascribe to nations, and to forms of national identification, a central place in modern human experience that in fact jibes surprisingly poorly with the experience of the past quarter-century.

We need to recognise that what we term nations, national identification and nationalism should all be seen as methods and strategies for organising and mobilising populations and territories – but, crucially, as one set of methods and strategies among many others. Simply lining up quotations that invoke nations cannot by itself demonstrate that nations were the principal means for such organisation and mobilisation. One has to study the context for each quotation, and to try to understand the relative weight of such concepts as nation, kingdom, empire, dynasty, Christendom, and so forth at different periods. It can be argued that nationalism not only developed within specifically modern social and cultural contexts, but has proven especially useful and important in these contexts – I myself would make this argument. But we need to resist seeing nations and nationalism as essential to modernity or, indeed, to human social and political organisation in general. And we need to resist the temptation to think that 'becoming national' is akin to losing one's innocence, crossing a threshold that can never be re-crossed in the other direction. The historian Peter Sahlin, who has written one of the most important historical studies of French nationalism, maintains that forms of national identification often begin for purely instrumental reasons, but over time become 'sticky', acquiring deep and lasting meaning for those who profess them.<sup>9</sup> I quite agree, but with the caveat that even stickiness can be washed away in the proper circumstances. Not every sticky substance is superglue.

With these points in mind, what I would like to do in the remainder of this essay is to return to some of the themes I explored in *The Cult of the Nation in France*, and to consider them from a different angle, in light of the changes just discussed, and in light of subsequent research. In particular, I will draw on new scholarship on the Napoleonic period, which helps us to see the experience of the French Revolution from a new perspective.

## Revolutionary France and the Origins of Nationalism

In *The Cult of the Nation*, I advanced three broad, related arguments. First, I argued that in the decades around the year 1700, French elites found it increasingly attractive to imagine what they called the ‘nation’ or the ‘*patrie*’ as the fundamental unit of human coexistence. This shift followed, above all, from powerful changes within the religious sphere, which led these elites to think of the divine as something newly remote and mysterious, and therefore forced them to confront the problem of how human populations and territories might be conceived of, organised and mobilised on their own terms, in ways that did not assume the human world to be bound up in a complex web centred in heaven. And as a result of the shift, the concepts of nation and *patrie* acquired crucial new political significance. Both the French monarchy and its ideological opponents – the most important of these, significantly, was called the *parti patriotique* – tried to associate themselves with these concepts. Still, throughout most of the century, both sides continued to define the nation in much the same way it had been defined for hundreds of years. A nation for them was a community of birth: a natural, organic phenomenon that traced its origins back into the mists of time, and that could flourish, wither and die much as individual humans did.

My second argument was that in the turmoil of pre-revolutionary politics and culture, this definition of the nation changed, and became much more demanding. French elites came to see a nation not simply as a natural community, but as a spiritual one, bound together by shared values, shared laws, and by a host of what we would now call shared cultural practices, including the same language. And they therefore came to the surprising and politically potent conclusion that France itself was not, in fact, a nation. The *abbé* Sieyès, known for his uncompromising assertion of national sovereignty in the year 1789, also spoke, in the same year, of the need to make ‘all the parts of France into a single body, and all the peoples who divide it into a single Nation’.<sup>10</sup> An anonymous journalist

commented at the same time, even more strikingly, 'the French perceive quite well that they are not a nation; they want to become one'.<sup>11</sup> After 1789, the leading French revolutionaries nearly all embraced this view of things, and set forth as a principal goal of the Revolution the construction of a nation: the transformation of the many different peoples of France into a single nation united by common values, common practices and a common language (for in 1789, what is today called standard French was still spoken as a first language by a relatively small minority of the population).

It was this moment, I argued, that marked the birth of nationalism in France. And I therefore suggested the need to make a very strong distinction between national sentiment and pride, on the one hand, and national-*ism*, on the other. National sentiment and national pride are very old phenomena, traceable at least to the Middle Ages.<sup>12</sup> They are rooted in a recognition of a nation's existence, and generally involve expressions of devotion to and support for it. Such expressions can be found plentifully in medieval and Renaissance writings. National-*ism*, by contrast, is a conscious political programme aimed at the construction of a nation where one didn't exist, or existed only partially. It generally involves the sort of educational programmes championed by the French revolutionaries – programmes that teach common values, common civic habits and, if necessary, a common language. But it can also involve expanding a nation's frontiers to include territories and populations unjustly separated from the heartland. And it can involve segregating or even expelling minority populations deemed not to have a home in it. National-*ism* also generally presents a substantial paradox, or contradiction. On the one hand, nationalist leaders – Sieyès is a good example – generally make exorbitant claims in the name of the nation, invoking it as a sovereign authority that trumps all others.<sup>13</sup> But on the other hand, at the very same time, they are asserting that the nation does not yet exist, or fully exist, and needs to be constructed. The contradiction is generally resolved by a recourse to history. The nation in question is asserted to have existed since time immemorial, and to possess sweeping rights – to territory, to populations, to international status – derived from this pedigree. But now it has fallen into disrepair, into corruption, into degeneration. It therefore needs to be *re*-built, *re*-constructed, *re*-instated. Its rights need to be *re*-covered.<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that the French revolutionaries, even as they specifically disavowed nearly all of the French past, nevertheless instinctively spoke of 'recovering' the rights of the nation, rather than of founding the nation as something entirely new. A pair of enterprising revolutionary pamphleteers in 1793 went so far as to insist that



the rights of the original French nation had to be pulled out from under the detritus, not just of the French monarchy, but of the Roman Empire and the Frankish conquest. They therefore suggested that as the true nation re-emerged, it should change its name back to Gaul.<sup>15</sup> This, then, was the second argument of my book.

The third argument was that particularly during the radical phase of the French Revolution, in 1793-94, a true nationalist programme took shape for the first time in French history – perhaps in European history. But it did so in a rather ironic fashion. Initially in the Revolution, much of the discussion about things national focused on the need to reform the French national character, which was allegedly too ‘light’ – *léger* – pleasure-loving and frivolous. I could not resist calling an article I wrote on this subject, in homage to Kundera, ‘The Unbearable Lightness of Being French’.<sup>16</sup> Among the means discussed for reforming the French character were a stricter school curriculum, the performance of sober republican stage plays, and the organisation of civic festivals. These were some of the venues which Enlightenment authors had identified as most important for the forming of *moeurs* – moral habits and customs. In his *Letter to d’Alembert*, Rousseau had suggested, for instance, that Molière’s play *The Misanthrope* taught the wrong moral message, by encouraging spectators to believe in the social value of polite mendacity.<sup>17</sup> His revolutionary disciple Philippe Fabre d’Églantine rewrote the play in 1790, turning the villain Alceste into the hero and insisting on the need for perfect sincerity in all things. The new play became the greatest hit of the revolutionary stage.<sup>18</sup> But by the end of the year 1792, the heads of the revolutionary government had come to realise that the school-educated, theatre-attending, festival-participating population they hoped to reform in these venues in fact constituted only a very small, socially elite part of a much larger nation. This year had brought, along with the proclamation of the Republic, the institution of universal adult manhood suffrage for the first time in European history. It had brought to prominence the urban militants, many of them artisans and shopkeepers, known as the *sans-culottes*. And it had led to the rapid spread of Jacobin societies in the countryside. All of these events had driven home to the revolutionary leadership that they could not reform the national character by rewriting Molière. They had to reach into the urban slums, into the towns, and above all into the peasant villages where the vast majority of the 28 million French citizens actually lived.

But how to accomplish this task, in a country where the state still had a very small presence in most people’s daily lives – where justice had until

recently been rendered by seigneurial lords, most tax collection had been contracted out to private companies, and police forces remained small and scattered? Recent history offered only one compelling example of how an institution might actually reach into villages and reshape the lives of millions of peasants, and this institution was not the French state. The revolutionary leader and Protestant pastor Jean-Paul Rabaut de Saint-Etienne identified it in a speech he made to the Convention in December 1792, on the theme of how to re-educate the French, and, in his words, 'to make them into a new people'. The task, he explained, required 'an infallible means of transmitting, constantly and immediately, to all the French at once the same uniform ideas'. And who had previously managed to do such a thing? Here is Rabaut's answer: 'The secret was well-known to the priests, who, with their catechisms, their processions ... their ceremonies, sermons, hymns, missions, pilgrimages, patron saints, paintings, and all that nature placed at their disposal, infallibly led men to the goal they designated ... In this way they managed to cast many far-flung nations, different in their customs, languages, laws, colour and physical makeup, into the same mold, and to give them the same opinions ... Should we not do in the name of truth and freedom, what [they] so often did in the name of slavery?'<sup>19</sup> I argued that in fact it was the great evangelising 'missions' of the Counter-Reformation which provided the most important model for French revolutionary nation-building. Indeed, the revolutionary programmes were devised in the first instance by clergymen turned revolutionaries such as Rabaut, Henri Grégoire, Antoine-Adrien Lamourette, Hyacinthe Sermet and Joseph Cerutti.<sup>20</sup> This debt to the clergy became visible especially in the revolutionary debates about the need for a national language. The French Old Regime monarchy had rarely treated France's enormous linguistic diversity as a serious problem. Only with the Revolution did it become seen as vital for all French citizens to have a means of understanding each other, and the state. Initially, the revolutionary government pursued a policy of translation, hoping to make laws and parliamentary debates available in print in the principal local languages and dialects. By 1794, thanks above all to the influence of the *abbé* Grégoire, the pendulum had swung towards forcing the entire population to adopt standard French, not merely as the language of public exchange, but as the language of the home. Throughout the revolutionary period, the debates on language were dominated by clergymen, and followed directly from Reformation-era debates about the role of language in imparting to peasants a proper understanding of the Christian religion and Christian morality. Most of the documents actually printed in local

dialects during the Revolution concerned the Revolution's attempt to restructure the Catholic Church in France.<sup>21</sup>

These were the principal arguments of my book, and in my conclusion I suggested that the French revolutionary experience had important consequences for the larger story of nationalism, both in France and elsewhere. Following on the French example, the idea of nation-building, of conscious political programmes aimed at constructing or reconstructing national communities, spread throughout the Western world. These programmes could take different shapes from the French one, most notably in focusing far more heavily than in France on the creation of ethnically homogenous nation-states in historically national territories. But the impulse towards nation-building remained the same. And in France itself, I suggested, such programmes became vital to the identity of later republican regimes. The Third Republic, in particular, became tightly identified with a nation-building programme aimed in the first instance at French peasants, but that also extended in different ways to colonial subjects and to immigrants.<sup>22</sup>

Looking back on this conclusion today, I would defend most of it, but I am also quite aware that I engaged in a certain sleight of hand. Specifically, I jumped too quickly, and too easily, from the end of the radical Revolution in 1794 to the foundation of the Third Republic in 1870. I briefly discussed the Napoleonic experience, and the way that non-republican forms of French nationalism took shape in the early nineteenth century – forms that put more stress on ethnicity, on religion and on monarchical tradition than on republican values and a shared culture. But I took for granted, not simply a continuity of national thought from the First Republic to the Third, but a cumulative process whereby the seeds first planted by the Jacobins burst fully into the sunlight of republican modernity at the end of the nineteenth century. Looking at these assumptions from the vantage point of the past quarter-century, I am not sure if they were entirely justified.

To explore this question further, I will now look more closely at the experience of one particular piece of post-Revolutionary French history, namely the Napoleonic Empire. How does it fit into the history of French, and more broadly, European nationalism? Did it see a continued development of the national and nationalist ideas and practices I have just been discussing? And to the extent it did not, should we understand it as nothing but a temporary deviation from the main lines of force of French history? Or did it represent a path which, while not taken, was no less modern and perhaps even no less viable than the one that France, and European nation-states, ultimately did follow?

## The Napoleonic Empire and Revolutionary French Nationalism

There are certainly ways in which the form of nationalism that took shape in the Revolution continued to shape French political culture through the Napoleonic period. The continuities are linked to the fact that French revolutionary nationalism was also, paradoxically, universalist. It associated the French nation not with a particular ethnicity or territory, but with universal values, and a universal model of civilisation to which all peoples could aspire. The most important requirement for being French, in this view, was simply the desire to be so, the will to integrate into French civilisation. And so the French nation-building process could extend to territories newly conquered by the revolutionary armies just as easily as to territories that had belonged to France for centuries. In both cases the goal was the same: to replace older customs, values and language with those of the French Republic. Brittany and the Rhineland, Gascony and Lombardy: *même combat*. This universalism was defined and defended as early as 1790 by the deputy Philippe-Antoine Merlin de Douai, in a famous speech to the National Assembly concerning the integration of Alsace into France. 'The Alsatian people joined the French people because it wished to; it is therefore its will alone, and not the Peace of Westphalia, which has legitimised the union'.<sup>23</sup> It is a statement which anticipates Ernest Renan's famous definition of a nation's existence as a 'daily plebiscite'.<sup>24</sup>

If one thinks about French nationalism in this manner, then the expansion of the Napoleonic Empire far beyond France's historical boundaries can be seen as simply providing a much larger context for the same essential nation-building project to continue, and this is very much the view that several recent scholars of the Empire have taken. Michael Broers, notably, has written several works trying to apply the concept of 'cultural imperialism' to the Napoleonic enterprise, in which he argues that Napoleonic administrators saw the bulk of the newly-conquered populations under their control in very much the same way that their counterparts back within the historical French boundaries viewed the local peasantry: as savages in need of a distinctly French civilising mission. In detailed studies of French rule in the annexed regions of Italy, Broers cites Napoleonic officials there who sounded very much like their earlier revolutionary counterparts, insisting on the need to unite Italian populations, in their own words, 'entirely to the French'.<sup>25</sup> To be sure, this nationalist civilising project was no longer republican, but the continuities with the First Republic still seem clear. Just as in the Revolution itself, wartime conditions made it very difficult to put specific programmes of acculturation into effect. Still, it is worth noting

that, following upon the abbé Grégoire's revolutionary-era survey of the languages spoken in France, in 1806 Napoleonic officials began to carry out an even more ambitious survey of the languages spoken throughout large swathes of the Empire.<sup>26</sup>

Broers's work can easily be seen as reinforcing the view I put forth in *The Cult of the Nation*, namely that an enduring current of nationalist thought and practice flowed forward from the Revolution through subsequent French history, and constituted a necessary part of French, indeed European, modernity. Broers himself situated his work in very much this way, invoking my work in the process.<sup>27</sup>

And yet, it is easy to exaggerate the universalist reach and ambition even of revolutionary French nationalism. The historian Marc Belissa has argued that Maximilien Robespierre and his allies consistently resisted this implicitly expansionist view of the French nation and put forward a vision of France as one of a number of nations – defined more or less by their traditional historical boundaries – existing in peaceful cooperation with one another.<sup>28</sup> Edward Kolla has demonstrated very convincingly that the early revolutionary promises to accept into France any territory that requested annexation did not reflect any sort of a priori ideological vision. Rather, they amounted to improvised responses to demands that arose from pro-Revolutionary factions in particular territories, notably Corsica and Avignon, as a result of conflict there.<sup>29</sup> Merlin de Douai made his speech on Alsace to support Alsatians seeking to deprive German princes of the feudal rights they claimed in the province. So, at the very least, the universalist, expansionary implications of revolutionary French nationalism were more complex and contested than might appear at first glance.

Secondly, the argument that the Napoleonic Empire continued the revolutionary nationalist project relies heavily on testimony from a relatively narrow group of actors. Broers and others put great weight on the top civilian administrators in the newly annexed territory, and these were men who had disproportionately Jacobin backgrounds. It is very much unclear how much their views and aims were shared by lower-level French officials, or by the French military.<sup>30</sup> We do not really have much of a 'native' view either. Nor is there any real indication that the project of 'integrating' native populations in the newly-annexed territories reflected a deliberate policy elaborated at the highest levels of the imperial state. In 1793-94, the projects I have called nation-building were discussed and debated incessantly by the National Convention. There was very little equivalent discussion under the Empire. Even the linguistic survey carried out by Baron Coquebert de Montbret and his son for the Ministry of the Interior starting in 1806 seems

to have been largely scientific in nature. It was not intended, as Grégoire's had been, to prepare for and justify a massive project of language reform.<sup>31</sup>

The nationalist rhetoric of assimilation and integration was also brutally contradicted by the actual *treatment* of the newly annexed territories. In theory, after all, the former Jacobins were promising to Italians, Germans, Dutch and Belgians precisely what they were promising to Gascons and Bretons and Alsatians: namely, in return for integration, the full benefits of French citizenship and civilisation. But in practice, the French regime was far more concerned with extracting resources from these territories to feed the war effort, and with crushing all possible resistance. Certainly Napoleon himself, on the evidence of his correspondence, paid far more attention to questions of resources and resistance than to questions of cultural integration. For this reason, many historians are still ready to endorse Paul Schroeder's view of the Napoleonic Empire as an enterprise driven almost entirely by practical military considerations – Schroeder himself called it a 'criminal enterprise' – because of its supposed violations of international norms.<sup>32</sup>

This view is itself something of an exaggeration. For one thing, as Stuart Woolf and Isser Woloch have forcefully demonstrated, the Napoleonic administration often did take on a life of its own.<sup>33</sup> Considering the Napoleonic Empire without Napoleon is not quite like performing *Hamlet* without the prince. But more importantly, it is a mistake to insist on simple, rigid distinctions between regimes driven by 'ideology' on the one hand, and those driven by so-called 'pragmatic considerations' on the other. All regimes of course need to take issues of resources and survival into consideration. And all regimes pursue goals that follow from a certain vision of the world; they operate according to particular principles, and are run by people who hold particular values. The most battle-hardened and cynical soldier operates according to a set of ideas about how humans behave and live together, no less than the most fanatical ideologue does. The visions, principles and values at play in a given regime may not amount to a formally elaborated ideology that fits neatly between book covers. They may be confused and contradictory. But they are there, and require historical study.

From this point of view, it is worth noting that Napoleon Bonaparte himself certainly did elaborate a vision of European integration during his years as Emperor, even if he spent more time worrying about how to extract resources. His Police Minister Fouché remembered him saying, on the eve of the invasion of Russia, that he wanted 'to finish what has so far only been sketched out. We need a European law code, a European high court, a single currency, the same weights and measures, the same laws.

I must make all the peoples of Europe into a single people, and Paris, the capital of the world'.<sup>34</sup> In exile on Saint-Helena he often came back to these ideas. In 1816, he told one of his retinue that he had wanted to make the French, Spanish, Italians and Germans 'one single and uniform nation'.<sup>35</sup> His chronicler Las Cases recorded that he repeatedly returned to the idea of a single law code, court system, currency and weights and measures, so as to make Europe a 'single people', a 'single family'.<sup>36</sup>

These remarks might seem to support the thesis of nationalist continuity between the Revolution and the Empire, and to provide evidence that the local officials in Italy were in fact acting in pursuit of some sort of coherent, official policy. Yet Napoleon did not speak about absorbing other countries into the French nation. He spoke deliberately about 'Europe', and a project of European integration. Moreover, he did not attempt what we would now call cultural unification. To be sure, the official language of his imagined European Union would have been French, but Napoleon gave no sense, here or anywhere in his correspondence, that he expected the Germans or Italians or Spaniards to adopt French as the language of local government and business, still less as the language of their homes. When he talked about a single and uniform nation, he meant single and uniform on the level of laws and institutions. In short, his united Europe was not a nation in the sense that the Jacobins of 1793-94 meant the word nation, and it was not a nation in the sense that the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century would mean a nation. It was a purely political and administrative union, not a spiritual one.

The differences between the Napoleonic period and the Revolution becomes even clearer in light of recent work on the public culture of the First Empire. In his book *The Economy of Glory*, the literary historian Robert Morrissey has examined Napoleon's cult of personality, and taken it more seriously than most historians have done.<sup>37</sup> He has looked beyond the kitsch, and the scorn that Old Regime aristocrats showed for the jumped up artillery officer from Corsica. And he has made an intriguing argument, namely that Napoleon tried to raise the quality of glory to the level of a social principle, to make it a means of binding people together. 'As an affirmation of the individual in his or her relationship with the collectivity' Morrissey writes, 'glory enabled a reconciliation of the irreconcilable, personal interest with the general interest'.<sup>38</sup> He traces the way that the public culture of the Empire tried to develop this principle, providing fame and public recognition to acts of selfless devotion to the common good, through institutions such as the Legion of Honour. I would argue that the First Empire in fact saw in the abstract quality of glory very much what the revolutionaries



had seen in the abstract figure of the nation, namely a means of binding people together and pushing them to act for the common good – organising them and mobilising them – without reference to religion. This system of glory rested on two bases. First, it rested on solid, impartial, rational institutions – the sort of autocratic institutions that Napoleon had begun to construct under the Consulate. And secondly, it rested on absolute loyalty to a single individual who could pose as the absolute incarnation of the principle of glory: Napoleon himself. In this sense, the First Empire was anything but a traditional monarchy, despite all the attempts made by Napoleon's panegyrists to surround him with the trappings of the Caesars and Charlemagne. Napoleon's legitimacy and authority did not reside in his imperial office, but wholly in his person, in his glory, which he could only maintain through his military victories. Napoleon himself was thoroughly conscious of this point. As he told Las Cases in exile: 'I was the keystone of a structure that was not just brand new, but built on such shaky foundations. Its survival depended on each one of my battles'.<sup>39</sup>

To repeat, this was a political vision very different from the nationalist one of the Jacobins. One did not become part of the imagined community of the First Empire by speaking French and participating in common civic rituals and adopting Republican values and practices. One became part of it by submitting to the Empire's institutions and laws, and by giving complete and utter obedience to the Emperor. And one did so believing Napoleon had the mandate of God, not because he held a particular office or was the representative of the people, but because he embodied better than anyone else on earth a sublime quality, capable of inspiring his followers to glorious actions of their own. Arguably, this was a frail ideological basis on which to build a regime. More specifically, it could be argued that what Morrissey calls the 'economy of glory' in fact consisted mostly of militarism – that it exalted specifically military glory over all other sorts of contribution to the common good. Despite Napoleon's initial protestations on the subject, fully 97% of the nominations to the Legion of Honour under his rule went to soldiers.<sup>40</sup> He acted repeatedly to strengthen the position of the army, and gave huge preference in civilian society to his most successful commanders. He imposed forms of military discipline on the state administration and secondary schools, and dreamed of reconstructing the city of Paris around a series of military monuments.<sup>41</sup> Could such a regime have survived without constant war and victory? Benjamin Constant, for one, thought not. In his 1814 anti-Napoleonic tract *The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation*, he argued that in a modern world of constitutional regimes and commerce, a regime like Napoleon's was a grotesque anachronism.<sup>42</sup> It could be added that the



economy of glory acted to reinforce the separate, more purely military logic of Napoleon's epic duel with Great Britain pushing him into ever greater military efforts and risks, in what I have elsewhere called the 'first total war'.<sup>43</sup> In other words, it may have been self-defeating.

But hindsight is something to be handled with care, and we need to be careful about assuming that the Napoleonic enterprise was doomed to failure, and that the nationalist movements that were beginning to emerge in Europe at the time – many of them in direct opposition to Napoleon's rule – were assured of success. After all, for a time Napoleon did enjoy spectacular success, and many historians have made the case that even after his catastrophic failure in Russia, he still had opportunities to save at least a remnant of his empire. Few moments in history seem as prey to pure contingency as the years 1813-14, when peace seemed tantalizingly close at many moments.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, while Napoleon's regime itself did of course finally collapse, the 'economy of glory' did not vanish with it. In fact, it could be argued that something very similar provided an ideological foundation for the expanding European overseas empires of the nineteenth century. The cult of glory and of the heroic military leader remained alive and well among Europeans in Africa and Asia, most especially among European soldiers.<sup>45</sup> Many historians have recently speculated about a relatively direct connection between nostalgia for the Napoleonic Empire and the imperial impulse in Algeria.<sup>46</sup> I would suggest that an imperialist economy of glory coexisted, throughout the long nineteenth century, with the nationalist passions, and that they were just as important to European political culture.

But these speculations take me far away from the subject of this essay. So let me simply conclude by briefly restating the main point I have been trying to bring across. I would still argue today, as I did in *The Cult of the Nation*, for seeing nationalism as a modern, conscious, political programme, the first examples of which took shape in the era of the French Revolution. More specifically, I would put in a plea for considering it as a set of conscious, political methods and strategies for organising and mobilising populations and territories. But I would add, with my own hindsight, that we should not assume that some intrinsic logic of modernity favoured these particular methods and strategies over all others. They have proved enormously useful at particular periods for particular groups of people. But at other times other strategies could in fact prevail over them, as was the case immediately after the French Revolution, during the Napoleonic Empire. And as has also, arguably, been the case in much of the world over the past quarter-century for very different reasons.

## Notes

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5. See David A. Bell, 'Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution', *French Historical Studies* 37/1 (2014), 1-24.
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7. Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).
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12. See Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).
13. As in Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?* ([Paris], 1789).
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19. Jean-Paul Rabaut de Saint-Etienne, in *Réimpression de l'ancien Moniteur*, 32 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1840), vol. 14 (December 22, 1792), 803.

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22. *Ibid.*, 198-218.
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44. See, for instance, Michael V. Leggiere, *Napoleon and Berlin. The Franco-Prussian War in North Germany, 1813* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002); Munro Price, *Napoleon. The End of Glory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
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**Part Two**  
The Genealogy of National Identity



## 4 The Chronicler's Background

### Historical Discourse and National Identity in Early Modern Spain

*Cesc Esteve*

From antiquity until the modern age, the national background of the historian, and the extent and ways in which this might have determined his work, was an important and controversial issue in historiographic theory.<sup>1</sup> The rise of official historiography in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe led theorists to give serious thought to the key prerequisites of the state historian. Not only was he required to have political and military experience, literary skills and extensive knowledge of the ruling dynasties, the lands and peoples that he had to write about, but he also had to demonstrate his loyalty and commitment to them. And, like all good historians, the official chronicler was expected to be truthful, objective and fair. The fact that the writer was native-born was normally regarded as a guarantee of knowledge and ideological and emotional adherence to the object of his study; however, one also needed to consider that there was a greater risk that the historian's affinities and feelings for his community might compromise his professional integrity if he were native-born rather than foreign.

My aim is to give an account of the development of this debate in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish historiographic theory. I shall try to show that the debate about the chronicler's *naturaleza* evolved along with the changes that affected the ideas and uses of early modern historiography and in line with the dominant interests and biases of a wider and more complex ideological and disciplinary discourse.<sup>2</sup> The objective of this discourse, conditioned, in turn, by the political relations and international image of the Spanish monarchy, was the nationalisation of the official historiography of the Habsburgs, a process that its architects understood as the necessary precondition for the creation of a historical past on which to base Spanish national identity.<sup>3</sup>

### Nebrija and the Italian chroniclers

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Sicilian Lucius Marineus Siculus (1460-1533) and the Spaniard Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), both



professors at the University of Salamanca, were engaged in a bitter dispute over who should become the official chronicler of the history of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, sovereigns of the crowns of Castile (1474-1504) and Aragon (1479-1516). The confrontation was fought out in the field of historiographic theory, by means of letters and speeches that reflected on the qualities of history and the prerequisites of the good chronicler; these writings were eventually published as prologues to the works of history of each of the authors.<sup>4</sup> In one of these texts, Nebrija's *Divinatio in scribenda historia* (*Divinatio about how to write history*) (1515), whose thinly veiled purpose was to discredit his Sicilian rival in the eyes of the monarchs, Nebrija argued that it was doubtful whether a foreign writer would be able to write an objective history of the rulers of another nation.<sup>5</sup> In the specific case of the Italians, Nebrija assumed that they would not be wholly truthful because they were interested only in boosting their own prestige and they despised everything foreign. More particularly, Nebrija questioned the willingness of the Italians to write a faithful, honest account of the history of the Spaniards, since he understood that they harboured feelings of hatred and envy towards them.<sup>6</sup>

There was another reason of a different kind for doubting the suitability of Italian writers as the best royal chroniclers; it was common sense, Nebrija claimed, to suppose that there was no reason for them to know anything about the heroic exploits of the Spaniards, just as the Spanish generally had no idea about events in Italy, or any other foreign country, for that matter. It was the Seville humanist's opinion that the king was better advised to follow the old adage that a fool knows more in his own house than a wise man does in someone else's.<sup>7</sup> So the presumption of ignorance was added to the foreign historian's lack of objectivity. Perhaps Nebrija felt that the argument was not very solid or less than persuasive, for it was not so unusual in those days for princes to surround themselves with foreign writers, secretaries and counselors. Perhaps for that reason he tried to make the king see that the Italians were very hostile to monarchy and that there was no point in expecting any commitment from them in the defence of its interests. On the other hand, according to Nebrija, the Spanish were monarchists by nature and so were devoted servants of royalty. This collective ideological trait would disqualify the Italians from fulfilling one of the official chronicler's most important and delicate duties, namely to slant the account in such a way that the virtues and wise decisions of the prince were thrown into relief, while his defects and errors were concealed. If the historian did not intercede with any kind of ideological support or sense of loyalty to the monarch, it was not sensible to expect him to tilt the truth in the direction that most favoured the king.<sup>8</sup>

Once the Italian writers – including Lucius Marineus Siculus – had been discredited as qualified candidates for the post of official chronicler to the king, Nebrija dismissed the possibility of looking for historians in the ancient Roman province of Panonia, in France or in Germany, since it was his understanding that there were even fewer men of letters in those countries than in Spain.<sup>9</sup> In light of all these constraints, the wisest decision was to appoint a Spanish historian as chronicler to the Catholic Monarchs. And with all the more reason if, as was the case with Nebrija, the domestic candidate turned out to be a writer with a sound mastery of Latin, who had been present at the events that he had to relate, and had full and detailed information that had been diligently gathered from people who had witnessed the events at first hand.<sup>10</sup>

The national background of the historian was not a new debate in the critical tradition of historiography. The authorities of classical times and late antiquity had already addressed the question and laid down some commonplaces. In essence, critical tradition had established the principle that national historians were more credible than foreigners when it came to relating the events of their own countries.<sup>11</sup> This conviction was based on the general assumption that the historian received better and earlier information about things close to home than those that happened elsewhere, either because he was interested in the past of his own country and its people – a tendency that was considered normal and natural – or because he would necessarily be more familiar with his own land and anything to do with it. The greater trustworthiness of national historians was endorsed likewise by the reproaches and accusations of ignorance and bad faith levelled at Greek authors who had narrated the events of the Romans, Hebrew writers who had explained the history of the Greeks, or Romans who had rendered an account of the actions of the earliest Christians. The suspicions that were aroused by historians who wrote about the events of foreign nations were only partly offset by the wariness caused by the partisan bias of national historians, which derived, in turn, from the criticism that Greek, Hebrew and Roman historians had received for having exaggerated the achievements and virtues of their princes and countrymen.<sup>12</sup>

The presence of these *topoi* and their premises are easy to spot in Nebrija's reasoning and, generally speaking, in the debate that developed about the national background of the historian in Spanish historiographic theory in the early modern age. Even though he might have been motivated by his rivalry with Lucius Marineus Siculus, Nebrija made a decisive contribution to inscribing this discussion within the theoretical reflection about official historiography, and more specifically, about the choice of the prince's

chronicler. The issue of the national background of the historian may not be considered among the major topics of early modern historical thought, but there is no doubt that the Spanish treatise writers who paid most attention and attributed importance to it were those who showed most interest in regulating the writing, missions, uses and agents of official historiography.<sup>13</sup>

I shall try to explain the evolution of the debate by first reviewing the opinions of these theorists. To understand more thoroughly the drift of this discussion it is useful to focus on Nebrija's conception of official historiography. One of the arguments that carry more persuasive weight in his reasoning is the one that questions the ability of a foreign historian to discharge effectively the responsibility of being propagandist for the monarchs of Spain. There is no doubt that, by appealing to the deep-rooted monarchic sentiment of the Spanish people, Nebrija helped identify the Spanish nation with the kingdoms and territories belonging to the crown of the Catholic Monarchs. This identification was consolidated by various of the chronicles and general histories of Spain commissioned by the successive sovereigns of the country.<sup>14</sup> But what I should like to highlight here is that the nationalisation of official historiography was a requirement that Nebrija based on a standard of relevance with respect to the obligations of the profession; the prince's chronicler had to be Spanish because this was how he would carry out his most important task, which was none other than to relate events to the greater glory of his king.

### **Pedro de Navarra and the obligations of the historian**

This propagandistic conception of official historiography was, in fact, consonant with the constant ideological and political instrumentalisation of history in the early modern era. But it was precisely this subordination of knowledge about the past placed in the service of partisan causes and controversial purposes that led the theorists to try and regenerate the discipline to preserve its status as knowledge that was legitimate and useful, not only to the king but to the whole community. The position of Pedro de Navarra (c. 1504-67) with respect to the background of the prince's chronicler appears to be clearly determined by the need to rehabilitate history as an objective discourse that gives an impartial representation of events and their protagonists. Pedro de Navarra was not the official chronicler of any king or kingdom, and only occasionally devoted himself to cultivating historical literature. His interest in historiographic reflection must have arisen from his links with the courts of Philip II and the kingdom of Navarre,

for which he undertook several diplomatic missions. In the first of his five *Diálogos sobre cuál debe ser el cronista del príncipe* (*Dialogues on What the Prince's Chronicler Should Be*), published in 1560, the character of Cipriano asks his interlocutor, Basilio, to accept the task of writing the history of a virtuous Italian prince who is determined to free his country of all its ills. Who this prince might have been does not concern us here, although it is of interest to bear in mind that he was Italian. Basilio turns down the request, but undertakes to instruct Cipriano on the subject of the six qualities of the good chronicler, which were, in his opinion, knowledge, presence, truth, authority, freedom and neutrality.<sup>15</sup>

It was Basilio's understanding that the nationality of the historian would affect his neutrality. In the second dialogue, it was established that the chronicler was neutral when he had neither passion nor affection, that is, when he was neither an enemy of the prince nor too friendly with him, and he was also neutral when he was under no obligation. Basilio explains that this obligation would exist only with historians who were native to the kingdom they had to write about; so it was primarily a form of the historian's dependence on his homeland or nation, and secondarily on the prince of that nation. For this reason, the chronicler that Cipriano would be seeking for the virtuous prince should not be a native of Italy, since in that case there would be cause for doubting his neutrality.<sup>16</sup> In other places in the dialogues, Basilio insists, but more succinctly, on the necessity for the prince to choose a chronicler who is 'under no obligation', as well as 'not base, ignorant, depraved, sycophantic or mendacious', and among those regarded as suspect or not 'entirely upright' historians, he includes those who are 'natives' and those who would write 'under obligation to the homeland', together with those who would be swayed by opinion, passion or the importance of a family name.<sup>17</sup>

So, as Nebrija had done, Pedro de Navarra adopted a quality criterion in his dialogues for weighing up the effect of the chronicler's national background on official historiography. His preference for foreign chroniclers reversed the logic of Nebrija's argument; the feelings of loyalty and commitment that Spanish people professed towards the monarchy, to which Nebrija had appealed, now constituted an undesirable 'obligation'. At any rate, the objective that justified the arguments of both theorists was that the official historian should properly fulfil his task. As we have seen, each could equally appeal to the authority of classical tradition to support his preferences. However, theoretical discourse in the second half of the sixteenth century had distanced itself notably from the propagandistic conception of official history held by Nebrija. In the time of Navarra, the idea that had started to

take hold, and would eventually prevail, was that the discipline was useful to society, and to rulers in particular, only if it served to improve their political performance. As a result, the chronicler was required to be able to explain and, above all, analyse and evaluate the actions of princes free from emotional, ideological or professional ties. In this way, the veracity of history and the usefulness of its lessons started to depend in large measure on the ethical integrity of the chronicler.

### **Luis Cabrera de Córdoba and the cultural prestige of the nation**

In the treatise *De historia, para entenderla y escribirla* (*On History: How to Understand and Write It*) by the historian and royal secretary Luis Cabrera de Córdoba (1559-1623), published in 1611, half a century after Pedro de Navarra's dialogues, the concern to preserve the moral and professional integrity of the historian was still there.<sup>18</sup> Cabrera considered it indispensable for the historian to be able to work dispassionately. It was crucial for guaranteeing the veracity of the account that the view of events should not be conditioned by the writer's excessive admiration for his own people. This fault, Cabrera reminds us, had been rightly censured in classical authors such as Theopompus, Livy and Plutarch, who were, in so many other respects, model writers. Cabrera condemns the fact that historians of his own day still had trouble resisting the impulse of 'obligation' towards their own country that Pedro de Navarra so distrusted, as could be deduced from the account of a French writer who had decided to omit the capture of King François I at the Battle of Pavia in the hope of sowing doubt among his readers about whether the event had actually taken place.<sup>19</sup>

Cabrera was very familiar with the critical tradition and knew that the censure of national historians meant that foreign chroniclers were respected by some as more credible historians, as they were free of all passion, since, according to Polybius, they had neither homeland, nor city, nor king. Those who believed that this was a valid principle praised, for instance, the history of England that had been written by the Italian, Polydore Vergil, or the history of Poland by the Frenchman, Alexandre Gaguin, both modern authors whose names joined an ancient list of foreign historians as illustrious as Quintus Fabius Pictor and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, authors of chronicles of Rome written in Greek. Cabrera, however, is sceptical about the importance of this hierarchy of historians, and questions whether 'denationalising' historiography can resolve the problems arising

from patriotism. The examples in favour of this thesis, the treatise writer argues, can be countered with any number of other cases, both ancient and modern, in which foreign historians have been accused of being envious, liars, manipulators and slanderers.<sup>20</sup>

In Cabrera's opinion, the writer's national background is not a factor that can prevent suspicions and controversies from arising when the historical narrative concerns nations that are engaged in conflict or are 'enemies of each other'. It would make no difference in such a case how faithful to the truth the account was, or how fair and balanced the opinion of the chronicler, the common 'attachment' to one's own would cloud the reader's good judgement. In short, for Cabrera, the chronicler's *naturaleza* would not have a significant effect on improving the quality and public image of historiography, because the discipline would be subject to the forces and interests of agents (critics, readers) who would be beyond the control of the historian. The writer, at any rate, should act with integrity and impartiality and resign himself to receiving criticism that, on occasions, would be based on prejudices about his national background.<sup>21</sup>

The question had wider implications for the choice of the prince's chronicler, about which Cabrera explicitly states his preference for a native historian. The criterion used as the basis for this preference had nothing to do with observing any ethical or methodological principle or the ability of the chronicler to effectively carry out his task, but with the image of the monarchy, kingdom or nation that the prince would project to the world through his choice of chronicler. For this point, Cabrera reworked a commonplace of the critical tradition that was often employed to persuade rulers of the importance of the patronage and good use of historiography, since it had the power to determine whether the memory of the prince would be glorious or shameful. The *topos* laid down that the prince should choose his chronicler with the utmost care, not only because he would be responsible for shaping the prince's historical image, but also because the prince's reputation would be forever associated with the historian's.<sup>22</sup> Cabrera amplifies the responsibility of the prince by pointing out that, with the choice of the official chronicler, the cultural prestige of the nation of which he is the sovereign is also at stake. If the king considered it necessary to resort to foreign historians, it would signal to the world that he ruled a nation of ignoramuses. Cabrera suggests that, if the only viable option is to go looking in 'foreign kingdoms', the prince should make sure that he finds a historian who is wise and capable, because, if not, his nation and his own judgement will be questioned.<sup>23</sup>

## Jerónimo de San José and the instinct to protect the nation

My brief survey of theories about the national background of the historian ends with the treatise *Genio de la historia* (*The Genius of History*), by Fray Jerónimo de San José (1587-1654), published in 1651. San José was the chronicler general of his order, the Carmelites, and lost this position for refusing to accept the changes and deletions that the order's censors tried to impose on his *Historia de la Reforma* (*History of the Reformation*).<sup>24</sup> His own experience as official historian probably contributed to magnifying his concern to safeguard the integrity of the chronicler, which, at the same time, had been a prominent topic on the agenda of theoretical discourse for decades. As Cabrera had done, San José deployed an extensive repertoire of rules and advice in his treatise in pursuit of dispassionate historiography. In his opinion, various factors could jeopardise the integrity of the historian and the veracity of his work: the writer's lack of diligence, his affection, hatred and fear. The treatise writer defines 'affection' as a forceful inclination of the will towards oneself, towards another or 'some relative or some thing belonging to him'.<sup>25</sup> The historian's home country or nation would count as one of the 'things' that he would have affection for. San José does not condemn this propensity, which he regards as natural, but he does insist that the chronicler should dignify this patriotic affection and use it as a stimulus to learn about the deeds of his countrymen more comprehensively and in greater detail. However natural this inclination might be, it did not entitle the chronicler to be economical with the truth or to exaggerate the achievements of his compatriots.<sup>26</sup>

In this way, San José invalidated the implications of Nebrija's conviction that only Spanish historians could deviate in the appropriate fashion from the truth in order to serve the interests of the monarchs of Spain. Even so, he did not stipulate that official chroniclers should be foreigners, and, in fact, there is no explicit pronouncement on this question anywhere in San José's treatise. Nevertheless, the position he adopted with regard to other theoretical debates suggests that his discourse was dominated by a strongly nationalistic conception of historiography. San José maintains, for example, that it is the duty of the historian with integrity not to shy away from controversy in serious matters; in other words, if his professional colleagues attack the rights and honour of his religion, state or nation, he is obliged to defend them straightaway, and to condemn and respond to anyone who, out of ignorance or self-interest, questions the reputation of these institutions.<sup>27</sup> The treatise writer specifically states that those who insolently write in bad faith against religion or the nation deserve a strong,



angry and immediate riposte. San José argues in the first instance that it is lawful to defend the nation provided it has been unjustly attacked, but then goes on to explain that this reaction is the obligation of historians who are natives of the insulted nation. This reaction is at the same time presented by San José as a consequence of the protective instinct of historians towards their homeland, analogous to the instinct of children to protect their mother if she were being attacked.<sup>28</sup> This selfsame 'naturalist' assumption, imbued with a certain morality, sustains San José's advice to readers of historical literature, who are called upon to study, first and foremost and with greater commitment, the history of their own country, because, he says, 'it would be the ugliest of disorders to be well versed in things strange and foreign and to know nothing of one's own'.<sup>29</sup>

It seems obvious, then, that for San José either there would be no room for debate over the national background of the official chronicler or it would be resolved *naturally*, always in favour of the home-grown historian. From San José's reflections on the matter, it can be deduced that his conception of historiography was instrumental and belligerent, one that distanced itself from the tendency of early modern theoretical discourse to dissociate the discipline from political and ideological purposes and uses, but did, however, chime with the convictions, attitudes and ways of working of a large part of Spanish historians who were contemporaries of San José. It should be remembered that some of these were immersed at the time in disputes about sacred and ecclesiastical history, others in controversies between official historiographies of the various kingdoms of Spain, and yet others in polemics about the interpretation of Spanish actions in the New World. In fact, towards the end of Philip II's reign (1556-98), his advisers had already defended the need to promote an official historiography that took a more aggressive stance against the anti-Habsburg, anti-Spanish propaganda that Huguenot and 'rebel' Dutch authors, among others, had been disseminating in the form of historical and political literature. The foreign origin attributed to the fabrication and dissemination of the 'Black Legend' of the Spanish monarchy favoured the nationalisation of official historiography, especially that which had to give an account of the recent past and contemporary events. The court justified it as a measure that was both necessary and effective for contesting prejudiced, defamatory foreign historiography in order to protect the reputation and honour of the king and the Spaniards. The national historians' 'natural obligation towards their own country' was placed at the service of reasons of state. This same principle was used to legitimise a stricter policy of control and censorship of official historical discourse, which was called upon to administer information and opinion responsibly and with caution,



and to adopt strategies of 'light deceit' in the treatment of events that might damage the interests of the monarch and the country.<sup>30</sup>

San José's appeal to the defence of the homeland obeyed this historiographic policy and was heeded by historians, such as the chief chronicler of the Indies, Antonio de Solís (1610-86), who was 'under the obligation' to write the *Historia de la conquista de México* (*History of the Conquest of Mexico*), published in 1684, in defence of the colonial enterprise of 'persecution' of foreigners 'who are unable to endure the glory of our nation' and who would have written about the discoveries and conquests of the Spaniards 'with great temerity, and no less malice, in order to invent whatever they liked against our nation'. Nor, it should be noted, was Solís satisfied with the way in which the 'different home-grown authors' had accounted for the conquest, above all because their chronicles gave rise to accounts that were of 'little uniformity and consistency', and so diverse in their information that they managed to 'obscure and distort' the truth of the events and to favour, therefore, the propagandistic purposes of foreign chroniclers.<sup>31</sup> Hence, defending the nation entailed preserving the quality and prestige of its historiography, which had to be purged of errors that could have been the result of a lack of diligence and reflection, as Solís put it, or, according to Nicolás Antonio (1617-84), of the 'excess of affection that one feels for one's own excellence', that is, of the 'unbridled' patriotism of Father Jerónimo Román de la Higuera, the author of some false chronicles invented to demonstrate Spain's remote Christian origins.<sup>32</sup> Father Román's forgery was the most extreme manifestation of the damage that could be done to historiography by the chronicler's patriotism. It was necessary for criticism to safeguard the proper exploitation of the natural affection that the historian felt for his own people. Pedro Abarca's ability to write about his country 'with the impartiality of a foreigner' and to 'conquer either the strength or the sweetness' of that 'natural bewitchment' that had so often compromised the veracity and judgement of the chronicler, was therefore worthy of praise.<sup>33</sup> In short, Pedro de Navarra's fear that the national background of the chronicler would jeopardise the quality of his work still prevailed at the end of the seventeenth century, but within the framework of a heavily nationalised official historiography, in which the possibility that the solution might be to hire foreign writers was hardly contemplated. Nicolás Antonio declared that he had written his *Censura de historias fabulosas* (*Criticism of Fabulous Histories*) in 'defence of the truth, the homeland and the honour of our nation'. Correcting patriotic excesses had become one of the surveillance tasks of the orthodoxy of the discipline, and this, in its turn, had become a service to the nation.

## Concluding remarks

The nationalisation of official historiography and, more specifically, of the state historian was a process that was closely related to, but at the same time distinct from, the nationalisation of history, or the historic past. Its role and impact on the formation of modern national identities were less visible than that of the formation of a collective memory and a national mythology. It was not the view of the past, or the memory, or the product of historical discourse that was finally nationalised by means of this theoretical debate, but its agents and, with them, the principles and methods of the discipline. Its function, then, perhaps more discreet but no less necessary, was the intellectual legitimisation of modern national histories.

In their turn, the theories about the national background of the chronicler and the process of nationalisation of official historiography were both products and formative agents of a typically early modern nationalist discourse.<sup>34</sup> The framework of discussion for the debate is illustrative of the learned, elitist nature of a nationalism that served as an instrument for dynastic, corporative and personal interests, as the Nebrija case clearly demonstrates. The awareness and feeling of national identity were promoted by making use of the 'natural' links with the native community, that is, with the nation understood as the place of origin, whether it was a city, province, kingdom or group of kingdoms. The values and language of patriotism formed the basic structure of the discourse about the nation, which was identified on occasion with the monarchy, while at other times it was presented as the object of the enemy's envy or hatred and was often defined on the basis of symbolic capital such as honour and cultural prestige. Perhaps more than the rulers and the state, it was the historians and the discipline of historiography that were the main beneficiaries of that nationalism and its results, which would have served not only to strengthen awareness of the political importance of history but also to reinforce the conviction that historiography had progressed as a branch of knowledge.

## Notes

1. See *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011-12).
2. To be a *natural* of a nation, province or republic was the commonest way in Spanish at the time of referring to a person's link with his place of birth. The *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* by Sebastián de Covarrubias, published

- in 1611, points out that 'Natural de Toledo, el que nació y tiene su parentela en Toledo' [a *natural* of Toledo is one who was born in that city and whose family is there] in Martín de Riquer (ed.), S. de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Barcelona: Editorial Alta Fulla, 2003), 824.
3. There is an abundant bibliography about the role of history in the formation of national identities in early modern Europe, especially that which gives an account of the function of historical narrative in the formation of foundational stories and myths about the origins of the nation. For the case of Spain, see Ricardo García Cárcel (coord.), *La construcción de las Historias de España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2004), 45-193. I am unaware of any studies about the historiographical theory of Early Modernity, whether in Hispanic or other European historiographies, that have specifically tackled the debate about the national background of the historian.
  4. For Lucius Marineus Siculus and Antonio de Nebrija and their rivalry, which began in the 1490s, see Gregorio Hinojo Andrés, *Obras históricas de Nebrija. Estudio filológico* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1991); J.M. Maestre Maestre, 'La *Divinatio* in *scribenda historia* de Nebrija', *Euphrosyne. Revista de filología clásica* 23 (1995), 141-73; Erika Rummel, 'Marineo Sículo: A Protagonist of Humanism in Spain', *Renaissance Quarterly* 50/3 (1997), 701-22; Carmen Codoñer, 'Tres cronistas reales: Alfonso de Palencia, Antonio de Nebrija y Lucio Marineo Sículo', *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures and Cultures* 37/1 (2008), 111-43.
  5. It seems that the first version of the *Divinatio* was an epistle or speech that Nebrija addressed to Ferdinand the Catholic in 1509 to express his gratitude to the king for appointing him to the post of royal chronicler and for commissioning him to write the history of his reign. The *Divinatio* was subsequently published as the prologue to the *Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis Rerum a Ferdinando et Elisabe Hispaniarum felicissimis Regibus gestarum Decades Duae*, Granada, 1515. I quote from the *Divinatio* in its modern version in Latin with a Spanish translation by Hinojo Andrés, *Obras históricas de Nebrija*, 124-31.
  6. Nebrija, *Divinatio*, 126 and 128: 'Non tamen opinor satis tuto peregrinis hominibus historiae fides concredetur, Italis maxime, nullius rei magis quam gloriae avaris. Invident nobis laudem, indignantur quod illis imperitemus, coniurarunt inter se omnes odisse peregrinos, nosque Barbaros opicosque vocantes infami appellatione foedant'. 'In short, I do not believe that the objectivity of history can be entrusted with absolute confidence to foreigners, and even less to the Italians, covetous only of their prestige. They are envious of our glory, they are angry because we rule over them, they have colluded to despise all foreigners and, by calling us barbarians and bumpkins, they insult us with defamatory names'.
  7. Ibid., 128: 'Quid? quod res nostrae non minus ignotae sunt illis quam nobis Italicae, atque ut est in adagio illo vulgari: Multo callidior est insipiens domi suae, quam sapiens alienae?'. 'What? Aren't our heroic exploits just as

unknown to them as those of Italy are to us, and, as a common adage has it, isn't a fool in his own house more competent than the wise man in someone else's?'.

8. Ibid., 128 and 130: 'Sed esto, aequae illis ac nobis res Hispaniae sint notae, utri magis ex animo res ipsas scribing, illi qui simulatae cuiusdam libertatis amore regum nomen odere, regumque imperia detrectant, an nos qui sine Regibus degere nescimus, qui religiose Reges salutare consuevimus, de quorum salute non minus quam de nostra solliciti sumus, quos non minori observantia colimus quam ducem suum apiculae? Et quoniam, ut inquit poeta, vitiis nemo sine nascitur, optimusque ille est, qui minimis urgetur, uter vitia mitiorem in partem nominabit, qui diligit, an qui negligit? ... Atque dicet quispiam, prima historiae virtus est, ut vera narret. Sit ita sane: sed si paululum est a veritate declinandum, quia non est cuiusque medium assequi, tutius atque magis ingenuum in favorabiliorem partem declinare'. 'But let's concede that they know the history of Spain as we do. Who will narrate the events with greater interest, those who hate the title of King, under the guise of an apparent freedom, and discredit monarchical rule, or we, who cannot live without a King, who salute him with genuine veneration, who are no less concerned for his health than for our own, and whose respect for him is no less attentive than that shown by the bees to their Queen? And since, as the poet says, nobody is born without defects and the best is the person with the weakest ones, who would tend to minimise a description of the defects, the one who loves or the one who despises? ... Now, someone will tell me that the first law of history is to tell the truth. Let it be so; but if one has to stray a little from the truth because it is beyond the scope of anyone to find the middle way, it is safer and more honourable to stray towards the most favourable side'.
9. Ibid., 130: 'Quando igitur ab Italia his rationibus excludimur, forsitan ex Pannonia, aut ex Germania, aut ex Gallia supplicat implorabimus? Quid si apud nationes illas non minus litterarum hominum penuria est, quam in Hispania?'. 'If, for these reasons, we must steer clear of Italy, do we really need reinforcements from Pannonia, France or Germany? And, is it not the case that there is no less a dearth of men of letters in those countries than in Spain?'. From Nebrija's reflections, it can be deduced that it was in Italy where the best trained men of letters were to be found in abundance, which was why it made most sense to look for competent chroniclers there, particularly if what was required was to promote the writing of historical literature in Latin. That conviction persisted among the counsellors and intellectuals who surrounded Charles V and Philip II and who mediated, for example, in the attempts to hire the services of Paolo Giovio and Uberto Foglietta; see E. García Hernán, 'La España de los cronistas reales en los siglos XVI y XVII', *Norba. Revista de Historia* 19 (2006), 125-50, at 138.
10. Nebrija, *Divinatio*, 130: 'Quod his in rebus quas scripturi sumus, aut ipsi interfuimus, cum gererentur, aut ab iis qui interfuerunt, accepimus: & quasi

- divinare fore, ut aliquando hanc operam navaturus essem, ita omnia inquirebam, omnia explorabam, omnia notabam'. 'Besides, in what we are going to narrate, we were either involved in it as it was taking place, or we received eyewitness accounts; and, as if I had an inkling that I would some day have to carry out this task, I conscientiously investigated all the details, asked questions and made notes of them'.
11. Thucydides, Cicero, Macrobius and Strabo are some of the names most often quoted by treatise writers to lend authority to the argument attributing greater credibility to historians who were natives of the countries that they were writing about. This principle of greater reliability and veracity was also granted, as a matter of tradition, to historians appointed by public powers, as against private historians; to authors who related contemporary events, as opposed to those who narrated events that had occurred in the remote and distant past; and to chroniclers who had been eye witnesses, in contrast to those who explained events on the basis of other sources of information. See, for example, Anniius of Viterbo, *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium* (Rome, 1498), Bk. 11 and 14; Melchor Cano, *De locis theologicis* (Salamanca, 1563), Bk. IX, Ch. 6; Antonio de Herrera, 'Discurso sobre los provechos de la historia' (c. 1605) in Juan Antonio de Zamácola (ed.), *Discursos morales, políticos e históricos inéditos de don Antonio de Herrera cronista del rey don Felipe Segundo* (Madrid: Imprenta de Ruiz, 1804), 1-20, 7; Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, *De historia para entenderla y escribirla* (Madrid: Luis Sanchez, 1611), Bk. I, Disc. 14, 34; Jerónimo de San José, *Genio de la historia* (1651) (Madrid: Imprenta de don Antonio Muñoz del Valle, 1768), I, Ch. 4, 21-2.
  12. Plutarch, Josephus and Livy are perhaps the classical authors most often criticised for giving preferential treatment to their countrymen, although the tradition of complaints and accusations of patriotic partiality affected many more writers and continued into the sixteenth century, brought up to date by the controversies that faced French, Italian and Spanish historians, as well as Catholic and Protestant writers. See Juan Costa, *De conscribenda rerum historia libri duo* (Zaragoza, 1591), Bk. II, 4-5; Cabrera, *De historia*, Bk. I, Disc. 6, 17-8.
  13. For official historiography in modern Europe, see Chantal Grell (ed.), *Les historiographes en Europe de la fin du Moyen Âge à la Revolution* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006); more particularly, for the royal chroniclers in early modern Spain, see J.L. Bermejo Cabrero, 'Orígenes del oficio de cronista real', *Hispania* 40 (1980), 395-409; Richard L. Kagan, *Clio and the Crown. The Politics of History in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); K. von Ostenfeld-Suske, 'Writing Official History in Spain: History and Politics, c. 1470-1600', in J. Rabasa, M. Sato, E. Tortarolo and D. Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, 1400-1800*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 428-48.

14. Identification or strong ties between the monarchy and the idea of the Spanish nation – a distinct entity and of greater scope than the homelands and provinces (in other words, cities, regions and kingdoms) that comprised it – can be appreciated in Esteban de Garibay's *Compendio historial* (1570) and Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas's *Historia general del mundo* (1601-12) and intensified particularly in the historiography of the first part of the reign of Philip IV, during the years when the Count-Duke of Olivares was the royal favourite, and which ended in 1643. However, this identification was developed in a Spanish historiography in which the term nation was often used to designate the cities, regions and kingdoms that made up the dominions of the Spanish monarchy; see Xavier Gil Pujol, 'One King, One Faith, Many Nations: Patria and Nation in Spain, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries', in Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), *'Patria' und 'Patrioten' vor dem Patriotismus* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 105-38; Richard L. Kagan, 'Nación y patria en la historiografía de la época austriaca', in Alain Tallon (ed.), *Le sentiment national dans l'Europe méridionale aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2007), 205-25, at 212.
15. Pedro de Navarra, *Diálogos, qual debe ser el chronista del príncipe* (Tolosa: en casa de Iacobo Colomerio, s.a. [1560?]), Dialogue I, 3-4: 'C. Qué son las partes que se requieren para que uno sea buen chronista? B. A mi parecer son seis cosas las que debe tener: y si sin tenerlas se pone enello, él hará afrenta al príncipe de quien escribe, y aun a sí mismo. Porque meritamente lo juzgaran por osado, y aun temerario: y son estas, Sciencia, Presencia, Verdad, Autoridad, Libertad, y Neutralidad'. 'C. What qualities are required to be a good chronicler? B. In my opinion, he should have six things: and if he starts on it without having them, he will cause an affront to the prince that he is writing about, and even to himself, because he will be rightly judged as insolent, even reckless: and they are these: Knowledge, Presence, Truth, Authority, Freedom and Neutrality'; see G. Cabello Porras, 'Pedro de Navarra: revisión de un humanista. Bibliografía repertoriada de los siglos XVI-XVII', *Lectura y Signo* 3 (2008), 65-115.
16. Navarra, *Diálogos*, Dialogue II, 5: 'C. Qué entiendes por neutral? B. Entiendo que sea sin pasión, afición y obligación. Sin pasión, que no sea enemigo al príncipe, de quien escribe. Sin afición, que tampoco le sea demasiado amigo. Sin obligación, que no sea natural. Exemplo de nuestro monarca, al qual el Español es poco amigo, y el Francés aficionado, y el Italiano obligado'. 'C. What do you understand by neutral? B. I understand it to be without passion, affection or obligation. Without passion, that the writer should not be an enemy to the prince. Without affection, that he should not be too friendly either. Not under obligation, that he should not be a native [of the country]. Take, for example, our monarch, towards whom the Spaniard is unfriendly, the Frenchman favourable and the Italian under obligation'.
17. Navarra, *Diálogos*, Dialogue II, 7-8: 'B. Estos [los cronistas] son los que nos dan ser y renombre bueno o malo para durante el mundo. Y por tanto debe

ser electo el chronista con gran diligencia, y prudencia: no vil, no ignorante, no interesado, no apasionado, no obligado, no vicioso, no adulator, no audaz, no verboso ni mintroso: sino vero, experto, Christiano, virtuoso, illustre, o noble ... Otros escriben por adular al príncipe, esperando más premio de hacienda, que de buen nombre en la república. Otros escriben mandados y premiados del príncipe, y estos tales (como está dicho) no sé si serán del todo rectos. Otros escriben por la obligación de la patria, por la opinión, por la pasión, amistad, o apellido. E aun (a veces) algunos por vengarse con la pluma de quienes no osan o no pueden vengarse con la espada. De todos estos se puede tener poca fe, pues su fin es interés o pasión'. 'B. These [the chroniclers] are the ones who make us who we are and give us a good or bad reputation throughout the world. And for this reason the chronicler should be chosen with great diligence and prudence; [someone who is] not base, not ignorant, not self-serving, not passionate, not obliged, not depraved, not sycophantic, not audacious, not verbose, nor mendacious; but true, expert, Christian, virtuous, illustrious, and noble ... Others write in order to flatter the prince, expecting to be rewarded more with wealth than with a good name in the republic. Others write on the orders of the prince and are rewarded by him; I do not know whether such as these (as it is said) will be altogether upright. Others write under obligation to the homeland, swayed by opinion, passion, friendship or a family name. And there are even those who (at times) use the pen to take revenge on those whom they dare not or are unable to take revenge on with the sword. Little faith can be placed in any of these, since their aim is self-interest or passion'. Dialogue IV, 13: 'C. Tú pretendes en efecto, según lo que colijo de tus palabras, que el perfecto chronista ha de ser neutral: para que escriba sin odio, pasión ni obligación'. 'C. You claim, in effect, from what I gather from your words, that the perfect chronicler must be neutral so that he can write without hatred, passion or obligation'.

18. Although he never became royal chronicler, Cabrera carried out diplomatic and military missions for Philip II and became secretary to the queen on the death of the king, and a servant of Philip III. He wrote *Historia de Felipe II, Rey de España* (Madrid, 1619) and some *Relaciones de las cosas sucedidas en la corte de España desde 1599 hasta 1614* (unpublished until 1857); see Kagan, *Clio and the Crown*, 290-93.
19. Cabrera, *De historia*, Bk. II, Disc. 3, 56: 'Libre siempre el escritor de admiracion, conmisericordia, ambicion, adulacion, para no afectar la narracion. Por las exageraciones que hace Livio de sus Romanos, desplace a Trogo Pompeyo, diciendo que parece su orador demasidamente llevado del amor de ellos, como Plutarco del de sus griegos y odio de los romanos cuando habla de Coriolano. Halicarnaseo reprende a Teopompo también en esto. Un francés escritor moderno, de la batalla memorable del Parque de Pavía, pasa en silencio la prisión de su rey Francisco Primero, y objetado re-spondió: servirá de hacer dudar a largo tiempo en si fue preso o no'. 'Let the



writer always be free of admiration, commiseration, ambition and flattery so as not to affect the narration. Because of Livy's exaggerations about his Romans, he displeases Pompeius Trogus, who says that his [Livy's] orator seems too carried away by love of them, like Plutarch's love of his Greeks and his hatred of the Romans when he speaks of Coriolanus. [Dionysius of] Halicarnassus also reprehends Theopompus for the same thing. A modern French writer on the memorable Battle of Pavia passes over the capture of his king, François I, in silence and when taken to task about it, replied: it will serve to sow doubt for a long time about whether he was taken prisoner or not.'

20. Ibid., Bk. I, Disc. 6, 17-8: 'Dicen autores, escribe mejor el que no es natural de la provincia de quien hace historia, y que dijo bien Polibio, que no ha de tener patria, ciudad ni rey, porque está más libre de toda pasión. Ponen por ejemplo a Polidoro Virgilio escritor de Inglaterra, Alejandro Guaguino de Polonia, Filipe Calimaco de Ungría; dicen que Dionisio Alicarnaseo Griego sobrepujó a Livio, Tranquilo y Tácito, que escribieron de sus romanos. Fabio a Salustio y a Catón, que en su república florecieron, alegando, que de la ajena escribieron: y así mejor. Si esto fuese así, no tienen razón los griegos de quejarse de que en lo que escriben de sus cosas Cicerón y Jámblico digan que son livianos, que se creen de ligero; Juvenal mentirosos; Valerio palabreros, alabanciosos; ni los franceses de los italianos ...'. 'Authors say that the best writer is the one who is not a native of the province whose history he is writing and that Polybius put it well when he said that he should not have a homeland, city or king, because he is all the more free from passion. They hold up as examples Polydore Vergil, who wrote about England, Alexander Guaguinus, who wrote about Poland, and Philippus Callimachus, who wrote about Hungary; they say that the Greek Dionysius of Halicarnassus surpassed Livy, [Suetonius] Tranquillus and Tacitus, who wrote about their Romans; that Fabius surpassed Sallust and Cato, who flourished in their republic, citing the fact that they wrote about a republic that was not theirs, and it is much better so. If this were the case, the Greeks would have no reason to complain about Cicero's and Iamblichus's criticisms, accusing them of a lack of rigour when writing about their affairs; about Juvenal, who accuses them of being mendacious; about Valerius who brands them long-winded and boastful; and neither would the French have any reason to complain about the Italians ...'.
21. Ibid., Bk. I, Disc. 6, 18: 'Estas dificultades y objeciones nacen de las pasiones, no de culpa de los que escriben. A todos parecen mejores las cosas que se tratan de los hombres de su nación, de su parte, seguido, y amigos. Es difícil el dar satisfacción a todos, aun contando la verdad, escribiendo de dos naciones enemigas una de otra. Cada cual tiene su devoción y adherencia muchos, cuya afición particular no deja juicio a los lectores, y viene a parar sobre el historiador, pagando la pena de la culpa que no tiene, porque puede hacer fiel y legalmente lo que debe'. 'These difficulties and objec-



tions arise from the passions, and are not the fault of the writers. Everybody thinks that things to do with the men of their own nation, of their own side, followers and friends are the best. It is difficult to satisfy everyone, even telling the truth, when writing about two nations that are enemies of each other. Each one has his particular loyalty and many have their attachments, and this affection clouds the readers' judgement, and it ends up falling to the historian to pay the penalty for something that is not his fault, because he faithfully and legally does what he must'.

22. See examples in Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, *Memorial y registro breve de los lugares donde el Rey y Reina Católicos, nuestros Señores, estuvieron cada año desde el de 1468 hasta que Dios los llevó para sí* (1525), 'Proemio', in *Crónica de los Reyes de Castilla* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1953), 535-8, 536; Juan Páez de Castro, 'Memorial de las cosas necesarias para escribir historia' (1555), *Ciudad de Dios* 28 and 29 (1892), 601-10 and 27-37, 605; Navarra, *Diálogos*, Epistle dedicatory, 1-2 and Dialogue II, 7-8; Esteban de Garibay, *Los quarenta libros del compendio historial de las chronicas y universal historia de todos los reynos de España* (1570) (Barcelona: Sebastián de Comellas, 1628), Bk. I, Ch. 2, 3-4.
23. Cabrera, *De historia*, Bk. I, Disc. 6, 16: 'Las historias están por cuenta y a cargo de los príncipes. El que desea acertar en la elección de persona tan importante, con cuidado la mande buscar en sus reinos, y si no se hallare, en los extraños se busque. Va en esto la reputación de los príncipes, y de la nación de quien se ha de escribir, y más si es natural de ella. Habiendo de elegir entre buenos y sabios el mejor, si en lo que escribe muestra ignorancia, tendrán a toda la nación por bárbara. Por la estimación de la persona elegida por un rey, aprobada por sus consejos, miden los extranjeros las letras de aquella provincia'. 'Histories are on behalf of and at the behest of princes. Whoever wishes to make the right decision when choosing such an important person, should take care to have him sought in his own kingdoms, and if he should not be found [there], let him be sought in foreign ones. The reputation of princes is at stake here as well as of the nation that is to be written about, and more so if he is a native of that nation. He should choose the best one from among the good and the wise because if he demonstrates his ignorance in what he writes, the entire nation will be held to be barbarous. Foreigners measure the literary culture of that province according to their assessment of the person chosen by the king, and approved by his councils'.
24. For Fray Jerónimo de San José and his treatise, see Gonzalo Fontana Elboj, 'El *Genio de la historia* de Fray Jerónimo de San José en el marco de la tratadística histórica del humanismo', *Alazet: Revista de Filología* 14 (2002), 139-56.
25. San José, *Genio de la historia*, III, Ch. 7, 163-4: 'Comenzando pues, por el afecto que es una vehemente inclinacion de la voluntad a alguna cosa: ó la tal cosa, á que el Historiador está inclinado, es el mismo Historiador,

o es algun deudo y cosa suya, o es alguna otra persona estraña; respecto de los quales, y por afecto a ellos, puede flaquear, y torcerse la rectitud de su entereza en lo que escribe'. 'Beginning, then, with affection, which is a forceful inclination of the will towards something: or the very thing that the Historian is inclined towards is the Historian himself, or some relative or some other thing of his, or it is some other foreign person; with respect to these, and because of his affection for them, he may weaken and his integrity concerning what he writes goes awry'.

26. Ibid., III, Ch. 7, 166: 'Ya este notorio achaque de propio afecto no solo en sí mismo es algun tropiezo á la entereza del que escribe; sino tambien en lo que por qualquier camino pertenece á sus deudos, á sus amigos, á su patria y á su nacion: que son una buena parte, si yá no un otro todo de sí. Debe tambien templarse con la rectitud de la justicia, para tratar de las cosas destos, quando en la Historia se ofreciere alguna ocasion de referirlas ... Confieso que algo más se ha de conceder a los propios, que a los estraños; pero ese algo y ese más sea nacido, no de la diligencia o el afecto que debe ser igual para con todos, sino de la mayor ocasión, que por la propinquidad, o familiaridad con ellos tiene de mayores noticias y de averiguaciones más exactas. Por lo cual podrá y será obligación escribir sus cosas con más particularidad que las ajenas; pero nunca violando la entereza de la verdad'. 'Now this well-known weakness of affection for himself and his own is not only a stumbling block in itself to the integrity of the person writing, but also to anything along the way that pertains to his relatives, his friends, his homeland and his nation, which are a large part, even if not the whole, of himself. He should also be restrained by the rectitude of fairness in order to deal with matters such as these, whenever the occasion in History presents itself to give an account of them ... I admit that something more has to be granted to one's own than to foreigners; but let that something more be born, not of diligence or the affection that ought to be the same for all, but of the greater opportunity he has, through his proximity to or familiarity with them, which should enable the historian to obtain more important information and more precise checking. Because of this, he will be in a position, and indeed under an obligation, to write about his own things in a friendlier way than about foreigners; but never violating the integrity of the truth'.
27. Ibid., III, Ch. 8, 175: 'Por donde publicandose escritos contra el honor y dignidad de una Religion, de una Nacion, de una Republica, justisima y necesarisima obligacion es responder a los contrarios, y deshacer sus argumentos y calumnias con eficaces pruebas de relaciones y testimonios verdaderos, sopena de quedar la tal Comunidad o Republica despojada en quatro dias de sus honores, lustre y reputacion en el mundo'. 'Wherever writings are published against the honour and dignity of a Religion, Nation or Republic, it is the most just and necessary obligation to respond to the adversaries and to dismantle their arguments and calumnies with effective

- evidence from true accounts and testimonies, or the said Community or Republic risks being divested in no time of its honours, glory and reputation in the world'.
28. Ibid., III, Ch. 8, 181-3: 'Y si alguna vez se hubiere de herir, ha de ser en justa y necesaria defensa de su Republica, a quien fuera culpa no defender, y a cuya causa, asi a él, como a los demas naturales della arma el respeto de hijos: obligacion, que no solo reconocen las bestias, mas aun acusarian de ingratitud mas que bruta al hijo, que hallando a su madre ofendida, no le viesen arder en corage, solicitando la venganza. Que si es licito con daño del contrario defender cada uno su cuerpo: por qué no el de su madre la Republica, de quien los que en ella viven son miembros? No hay dolor que llegue a este; y a un gran dolor debese perdonar, quando algo excede. Esta excusa tuvieron los que escribieron Apologías en defensa de sus Patrias, y Religiones'. 'And if ever the historian has to inflict harm, let it be in the just and necessary defence of his republic; whoever does not defend it is blameworthy. Both the historian and the rest of those born in the republic owe it the respect expected of its children, an obligation that even beasts recognise. The child who finds his mother insulted and does not burn with anger and seek vengeance would be accused of barbarous ingratitude. If it is lawful for each one to defend his body by inflicting harm on the adversary, why will it not also be [lawful] to defend the body of his mother, the republic, which those who live in her are members of? There is no greater sorrow than this, the excesses of which should be forgiven. Those who wrote apologies in defence of their homelands and religions had this excuse'.
  29. Ibid., III, Ch. 10, 208: 'Digo pues, que lea enhorabuena el curioso mucha y varia historia; pero sea con tres cautelas importantes. La primera, que se aficione y emplee más en las que pertenecen a su patria, y a su estado: porque sería feísimo desorden ser muy versado en las cosas estrañas y ajenas, e ignorar las propias'. 'I say, then, may the curious have the good fortune to read plenty of varied history, but with three important provisos. The first, let him be more interested in and spend more time on those [histories] that belong to his homeland, and his state, because it would be the ugliest of disorders to be well versed in things strange and foreign and to know nothing of one's own'. See Gil Pujol, 'One King, One Faith, Many Nations', 109.
  30. Ricardo García Cárcel, *La construcción de las historias de España*, 16, identifies the Black Legend, along with 'linguistic and cultural narcissism' and the Providentialist awareness of the religious and imperial function of the Spanish monarchy as the factors that most contributed to endowing the meaning of Spain with 'national' content during the reign of Philip II, especially from the 1580s onwards; Kagan, *Clio and the Crown*, 126-30.
  31. Antonio de Solís, *Historia de la conquista de México* (Madrid: Imprenta de Bernardo de Villa-Diego, 1684), 'A los que leyeren', n.p.: 'Puse al principio de la historia su introducción, o proemio, como lo estilaron los antiguos, donde tuvieron su lugar los motivos que me obligaron a escribirla, para

defenderla de algunas equivocaciones que padeció en sus primeras noticias esta empresa, tratada en la verdad con poca reflexión de nuestros historiadores, y perseguida siempre de los extranjeros, que no pueden sufrir la gloria de nuestra nación'; 'I placed the introduction, or the proem as the ancients styled it, at the beginning of the history, which is the place for the reasons that obliged me to write it, in order to defend it from some errors that this undertaking suffered from in its earliest news, which was in truth treated by our own historians with little reflection and constantly targeted by foreigners who cannot abide the glory of our nation'; Bk. I, Ch. 1, 1-2: '... pero como las regiones de aquel Nuevo Mundo son tan distantes de nuestro hemisferio hallamos en los autores extranjeros grande osadía, y no menor malignidad, para inventar lo que quisieron contra nuestra nación, gastando libros enteros en culpar lo que erraron algunos, para deslucir lo que acertaron todos; y en los naturales, poca uniformidad y concordia en la narración de los sucesos: conociéndose, en esta diversidad de noticias, aquel peligro ordinario de la verdad, que suele desfigurarle cuando viene de lejos, degenerando de su ingenuidad todo aquello que se aparta de su origen.' '... but as the regions of that New World are so distant from our hemisphere, we find great temerity, and no less malice, in foreign authors who invented what they liked against our nation, spending entire books on finding fault because of the errors of a few, in order to detract from what everyone did right; and in the native writers, [there is] little uniformity and agreement in the narration of events: it is noticeable, then, how diversity of information endangers the truth which, since it comes from afar, is disfigured, for the innocence of everything that strays far from its origin is usually corrupted'.

32. Nicolás Antonio, *Censura de historias fabulosas* (Valencia: Antonio Bordazar de Artazu, 1742), Ch. I, 1-2: 'Escribo en defensa de la verdad, de la Patria, del honor de nuestra nación. El intento es encender una luz a los ojos de las naciones políticas de Europa, que claramente les dé a ver los engaños que ha podido introducir en ella la nueva invención de los Chronicos de Flavio Dextro, i Marco Máximo, y los de Luitprando, y Julián Pérez, con lo demás que se les atribuye ... No se ha de medir el crédito entero de la nuestra [nación], por los que han flaqueado en la facilidad con que admitieron esta invención, y con afecto mal gobernado la defienden [...] Ha padecido en esto nuestra nación la injuria que suele hacer a todas la destemplanza del afecto, con que se desea la propia excelencia, sin reparar en la honestidad de los medios, ni en el detrimento que se causa, o a la fama ajena, o a la propia'. 'I write in defence of the truth, the homeland, and the honour of our nation. The intention is to open the eyes of the political nations of Europe to the light, which will make them see clearly the falsehoods that have somehow been inserted into the new invention of the Chronicons of Flavius Dexter and Marcus Maximus, and those of Liutprand and Julián Pérez, with everything else that is attributed to them ... The entire credit of our nation is not to be measured by those who have so easily given way and ac-

cepted this invention and defend it with unbridled affection [...] Our nation has suffered in this the damage that the excess of affection that one feels for one's own excellence usually does to all of them [i.e. nations] regardless of the honesty of the means, or the detriment that is caused, either to the reputation of others or to one's own'. The work was written around 1652, but was not published until 1742.

33. In Diego de la Cueva's 'Censura' of the *Segunda parte de los Anales históricos de Aragón* by Pedro Abarca (Salamanca: Lucas Pérez, 1684), n.p.: 'Escribe de su patria, pero escribe con la indiferencia de extraño, porque en todo es peregrino; y para vencer o la fuerza o la dulzura de este hechizo natural, supo hallar otro *Logos*, más eficaz que el de Homero, en la severidad de su genio y de su juicio. De un escritor tan pródigo en alabanzas con los suyos como escaso con los forasteros se dijo festivamente que ni era mal ciudadano ni era buen historiador. *Nec maius est Civis, nec bonus Historicus*. Pero el nuestro, qué descansado podrá dormir y qué libre de esta nota!'. 'He writes about his homeland, but he writes with the impartiality of a foreigner, because he is unusual in everything; and to conquer either the strength or the sweetness of that natural bewitchment, he managed to find another *Logos*, more effective than Homer's, in the seriousness of his temperament and his judgement. It was said humorously of a writer as prodigal in praise of his own as he was parsimonious with strangers that he was neither a bad citizen nor a good historian. *Nec maius est Civis, nec bonus Historicus*. But how soundly ours will be able to sleep and how free from this censure!'.  
34. See Gil Pujol, 'One King, One Faith, Many Nations', 129-30; Xavier Torres Sans, *Naciones sin nacionalismo. Cataluña en la Monarquía Hispánica* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2008) 25-67; Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 14-7.

## 5 Arngrímur Jónsson and the Mapping of Iceland<sup>1</sup>

*Kim P. Middel*

Balancing over the fissure between a state of dependency and the rise of Icelandic self-awareness, the Icelandic historiographer Arngrímur Jónsson (1568-1648) succeeded in writing a history of Iceland that could hold its ground with contemporary historiographical works. From the tenth until the early thirteenth century, Iceland had known a socio-political structure consisting of chieftainries. After a brief period of internal political instability, it became a dependency of Norway, whose governance of Iceland was passed into Danish hands after the Kalmar Union of 1397, a situation that would last until Iceland's independence in 1944. Following the assumption of control over Iceland in 1262-64 by the Norwegian crown, the output of saga literature – Iceland's literary pride – dwindled throughout the fourteenth century, and despite the rise of *rímur* poetry, nothing that could be considered the saga's equal had emerged.<sup>2</sup> That is, until the second half of the sixteenth century. In a time when European rulers engaged historiographers to write national histories that recorded their realms' and/or dynastic, if not personal, glory on paper, the opportunity to revive Iceland's former literary – and historical – glory presented itself. King Christian IV and scholars from Denmark started taking an avid interest in literary sources available only in Iceland, which could corroborate or extend information from their own sources and thereby enable them to record Danish history. They sought the help of an Icelandic scholar, who had brought the existence of such sources to their attention, to make them available and translate them. In doing so, they inadvertently provided the scholar in question with all of the material needed to write a history of Iceland. Thus, Icelandic literature and Icelandic history would rise again, be it in Latin, in the only internationally acknowledged form of historiography at that time.

Arngrímur Jónsson was the man who brought this resurgence about. He was not the first Icelandic historiographer, but he was the most significant of his era. He had studied at the University in Copenhagen from 1585 until 1589 and produced a description of Iceland titled *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia* in 1593, a defence in Latin against a foreign work that had depicted Iceland negatively. This was the text that aroused the interest of Danish scholars in Icelandic sources and led to Arngrímur's working together with

Denmark's foremost scholars and royal historiographers. In other words, he had the scholarly credentials and expertise to take on the job, which resulted in his magnum opus *Crymogæa sive rerum Islandicarum libri III*, published in 1609. Leaning on Jean Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, published in 1572, he created a contemporary historiographical framework within which he could fit the Icelandic state.<sup>3</sup>

The ensuing narrative was to mark a new phase in awareness of the Icelandic self, and *Crymogæa* – a Latin name for Iceland invented by Arngrímur, based on the Greek words for ice (κρυμός) and land (γᾱίᾱ) – consequently has been interpreted as the text that laid the foundation for Icelandic linguistic purism and nationalism.<sup>4</sup> Arngrímur came to be considered the first Icelandic author to write about a Golden Age in Icelandic history, the age of the so-called republic or commonwealth, during which language, literature and culture had flourished, and he is considered the first to observe that the end of this imagined era coincided with the fall of Iceland's socio-political structure. Generally, it has been accepted that *Crymogæa* followed a classical path of humanist historiography by applying Bodin's description of the rise and fall of the Roman republic to the rise and fall of the medieval Icelandic free state.<sup>5</sup> Iceland, as Arngrímur seemed to want to impress upon his – foreign – audience, was as much part of global history as any other country, if not more so than others, and it deserved being placed on the map, both historically and literarily.

Yet there were two factors making the construction of such a fervent account of Icelandic national history anything but the obvious outcome. Firstly, there was the situation of dependency in which the country found itself, and secondly, there was no commission of the work by the head of state, whose main interest was the construction of Danish history and who did not pay Arngrímur to procure sources in order to write a history of Iceland. Arngrímur had to find a way around these obstacles. The question is: how did he do it?

This chapter aims to shed light on how Arngrímur succeeded in mapping Iceland within the boundaries of the Danish realm with the aid of Jean Bodin's work. I will propose that the general means that Arngrímur used to avoid any conflict with Christian IV in constructing his text was to distinguish the forms of sovereign government that Iceland had known historically and to attribute equal value to them. This framework allowed him to illuminate a past without denouncing the present; on the contrary, he illuminated a past continuing into the present, with a specific focus on the continuous purity of the language. It is my opinion that Arngrímur chose to





Figure 5.1 Arngrímur Jónsson (1568-1648). From: *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera Latina Conscripta*, vol. 4, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1957)

differ slightly with Bodin on that very topic in order to achieve this focus. I will argue that it is the governmental framework chosen and the difference between the *Methodus* and *Crymogæa* on the topic of language – as well as



an array of functional manoeuvres – that enabled Arngrímur to compose his work without raising royal Danish eyebrows. Furthermore, I aim to show that, in the long run, the consequence of Arngrímur's choices was that he unconsciously laid the foundation for the further development of an Icelandic self-awareness mainly focused on language. All of this happened within a political infrastructure in which the theme at hand – Iceland – was profiled separately by the angles chosen, while the author tried to keep up with international thought by making use of what Bodin had written and applying it to Iceland. Finally, with this study I hope to shed light on the stage in which Icelandic self-awareness found itself during early modern times, and to establish a basis for a review of how Arngrímur's work is regarded in present-day Icelandic research – the perceived application of a historic model ascribed to Bodin to the situation in Iceland as well as a perceived glorification of a past of independence – that will help achieve a full understanding of the significance of *Crymogæa*.

### **Iceland, Denmark and the world: making a mark at the boundaries of civilisation**

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the first humanist accounts by Icelandic authors writing in Latin about Iceland and its history saw the light.<sup>6</sup> Such works represented a landmark in Icelandic literary history, since no attempt to describe the country in a historiographic manner had been made previously. At this time, Iceland had been under foreign rule for three centuries. Ever since the Kalmar Union of 1397, Denmark had been in charge, and by the sixteenth century those in Iceland who sought higher education almost naturally ended up at the University of Copenhagen, where they became acquainted with contemporary thought and writing. It was there that Arngrímur Jónsson, a young scholar and clergyman from Iceland, received his education, met and exchanged information with Danish historians, and acquired the examples and the knowledge needed to engage in contemporary historiography. His historical writings would pave the way for Icelandic generations to come.

His first work, *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia*, was a response to a German travel account from 1561 about Iceland that aroused general indignation among Icelanders due to its negative representation of the country.<sup>7</sup> This publication, the poem *Van Ysslandt, Wat vor Egenschap, Wunder und Ardt des Volckes, der Deertte Vögel und Vische, darsülest gefunden werden* by the German merchant Gories Peerse, actually did not give an unreasonable

account of the country and its geographic conditions, but it did voice a rather negative one of the island's people. Peerse wrote that, among other things, prostitution and adultery were common among the Icelanders, who, according to him, also saw no harm in conning a German and who cried like animals whilst drinking beer.<sup>8</sup> The account was meant to be entertaining, the country seen through the eyes of a foreigner. Ísleifsson indicates that some have suggested that Peerse's negative view of the Icelanders probably meant that he had had little to do with the more educated among them.<sup>9</sup> If this were the case, then these would understandably be the ones most displeased by the poem. It was Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson who instigated the writing of a defence, and Arngrímur took on the task at his request.<sup>10</sup> The result, *Brevis Commentarius*, was written in 1592 and published in 1593 in Copenhagen.

Arngrímur's work had aroused great interest among Danish historians during his stay in that city in 1592-93, because it contained information about a shared Nordic past that they had not known existed and therefore had had no access to. Royal Chancellor Arild Huitfeldt employed Arngrímur to translate Icelandic historical sources, and thus he became instrumental in doing similar work for royal historiographers such as Niels Krag.<sup>11</sup> They brought Arngrímur to the attention of King Christian IV and implored the king to commission him to make Icelandic texts available to them for writing the history of Denmark and Greenland. Arngrímur had already dedicated, and sent a copy of, *Brevis Commentarius* to the king, seeking his patronage, and, with the support of Huitfeldt, he had received thirty *daler* in return, to be collected at the king's treasury.<sup>12</sup> Less than three years later, in April of 1596, Christian sent an open letter to his Icelandic subjects in which he urged them to hand over their manuscripts to Arngrímur, so that he could collect information from the sagas relevant to the construction of a Danish history and translate it into Danish.<sup>13</sup> He also sent Arngrímur a private letter reiterating his commission.<sup>14</sup>

Arngrímur set out to accomplish the task at hand and finished it in 1597 by producing one collection of texts concerning Denmark and one concerning Greenland.<sup>15</sup> He did not stick with the original assignment completely, in that he translated the texts into Latin, not into Danish. What's more: he used the manuscripts at his disposal to construct another, more comprehensive history of Iceland called *Crymogæa*, something which Christian had not commissioned him to do. There did not seem to have been any desire on the king's part at that point to map the Icelandic part of his realm within the greater context of a Danish history.<sup>16</sup> The lack of a royal assignment to write a specific description or history of Iceland, combined with having relevant

manuscripts at his disposal, gave Arngrímur a position in which he enjoyed relative authorial freedom, and he used it to compose a history of Iceland that met the international standards of historiography. This freedom was certainly limited, though, because singing the praises of Iceland's history within the boundaries of a state of dependency posed a problem, as did his desire to have the work printed in Denmark, which meant there were issues of censorship to be dealt with. In all, he had to take into consideration how to get it accepted by the Danish authorities.

On a practical note, Arngrímur had the experience required to make sure that the book would pass censorship: his *Brevis Commentarius* had been printed in Copenhagen, which meant it had passed censorship. In Denmark, only printing presses in Copenhagen were acknowledged, and approval for the printing of books at these presses was granted by the University of Copenhagen.<sup>17</sup> Since Arngrímur had studied and acquired contacts at the university, he is likely to have known what sort of text would pass, and he enjoyed the necessary support of Danish scholars, since they were interested in the part of a communal textual past to which Arngrímur had access and they did not. The initial factor in his favour regarding *Brevis Commentarius* was that his text was in Latin, not in Danish, and therefore it was not likely to corrupt the common man's way of thinking: it was aimed at a foreign, intellectual elite.<sup>18</sup> Next, he chose an accepted genre: the apologetic. And on top of this, Arngrímur's dedication of *Brevis Commentarius* to the king would have helped to get it accepted – a dedication that additionally entailed a financial reward from Christian IV.<sup>19</sup>

Arngrímur possibly thought that the same approach would work a second time, and after he finished *Crymogæa* in 1602, he tried to get it printed in Copenhagen. In the dedication, he wrote that in 1603, he had offered the book to the royal historiographer at that time, Jon Jacobsen Venusin, and to the rector of the university, Hans Poulsen Resen. Presumably he did this to find support for the book's publication, and he implied that both men approved of the work, since he did not offer it to the public eye until after he had communicated the work to them.<sup>20</sup> Given that Venusin was a friend and colleague, and Resen a professor of theology and as such actively involved in censorship, the fact that Arngrímur looked for their support was no coincidence.<sup>21</sup> They are bound to have given permission for publication.<sup>22</sup> But he had no luck getting the book printed in Copenhagen. The reason for this is probably the fact that there were only two printers active there in 1602-03, and their priorities likely did not include another book about Iceland considering the fact that *Brevis Commentarius* already had been published.<sup>23</sup> This is a more plausible explanation than the one

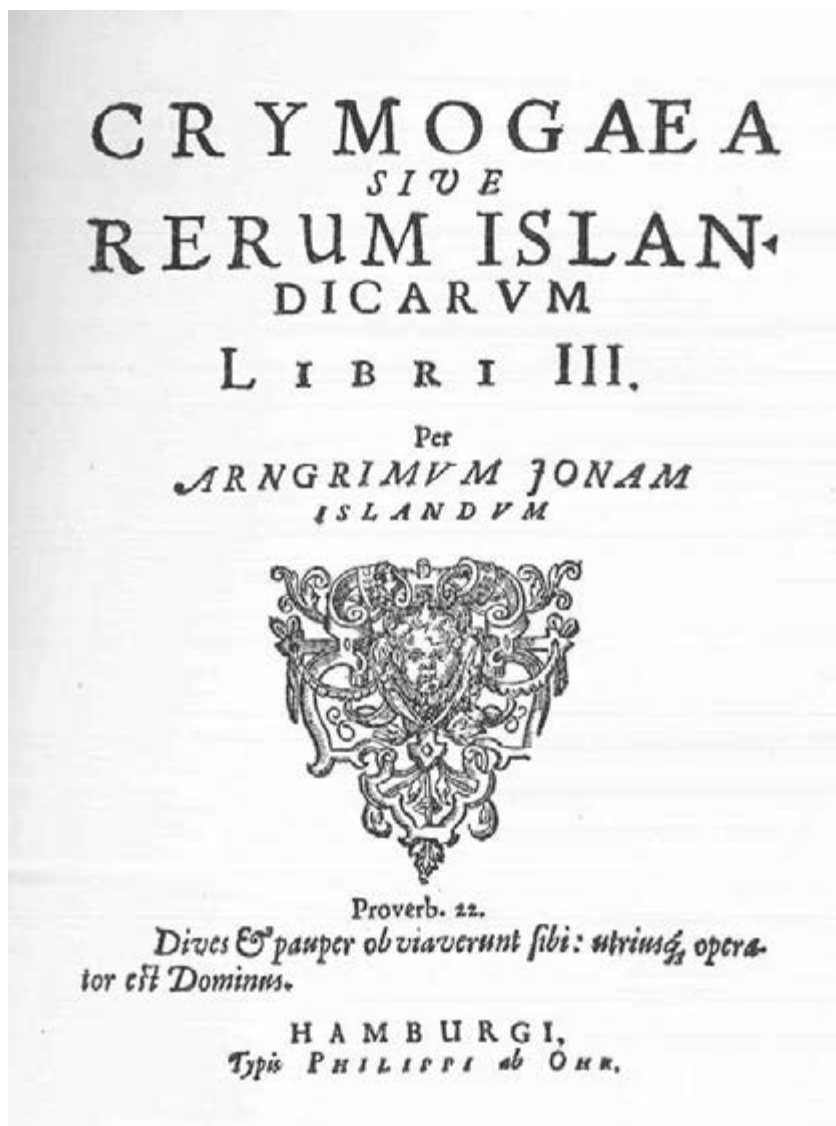


Figure 5.2 Title page of the original edition of *Crymogæa* (1609). Edition: *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera Latina Conscripta*, vol. 2, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1951), 1

that Benediktsson provided, when he suggested that Arngrímur could not find a printer because his Danish fellow historiographers had already got what they wanted from him and seemed to have lost interest in the appearance of another history of Iceland: the printers were probably the ones not interested.<sup>24</sup> If the manuscript of 1602, which is no longer extant,

included the dedication of the work to the king, this fact did not help him for the same reason; after many mishaps, the book was finally published in 1609 in Hamburg. He did send it to the king after it had been printed, with a dedication, and later he wrote that he was rewarded accordingly.<sup>25</sup> All obstacles seem to have been overcome – or had they?

## Humanism on Iceland: Arngrímur and Jean Bodin

There was another obstacle that Arngrímur had to deal with: he needed to come up with a design that would make his writings acceptable. Obviously, it was in his interest to write something that would not be rejected, as he wanted it to be dispersed internationally. It seems that to achieve the goal of acceptance and reception abroad, and most likely also to show that he was a historiographer on a par with his colleagues, he chose to shape his description of the Icelandic state and its past in *Crymogæa* by using an internationally acknowledged text for the understanding and writing of histories, the aforementioned *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* by Jean Bodin, as a point of reference. Also, as said before, he composed his text in Latin, not Icelandic. So far, so good: the point of reference and language chosen would serve the purpose very well. Yet there was also the subject itself: putting Iceland on the global map as a fully-fledged nation that could boast a serious history. In the first half of the seventeenth century, texts about historical subjects were subject to censorship by definition.<sup>26</sup> Since Arngrímur's intention was publication of *Crymogæa* in Denmark, he somehow had to 'sell' this subject within the greater realm of Denmark without causing a ripple, and as we saw, he succeeded. Since the king did reward him for dedicating and sending the book to him, and since Arngrímur allegedly had Venusin's and Resen's support, there seems to be little reason to assume that the text would have been rejected by the censors on grounds of content six years earlier. Therefore, Arngrímur had presumably found a solution to overcome the obstacle of his subject matter.

A clue as to how Arngrímur went about making his subject matter acceptable to the Danish palate may be found in the first book of *Crymogæa*, a general encyclopedia on Iceland's geography, language, people, customs and government. Chapter six, about Iceland's governmental set-up, opens with a reference to the sixth chapter of the *Methodus*: Arngrímur states that Bodin will answer the question whether Iceland is rightfully called a *res publica* and a *civitas*.<sup>27</sup> In Arngrímur's words, Bodin had written that a state consists of a number of *familiae*, consisting of three persons, or *collegia*,

consisting of five persons, that fall under the same rule. A state, therefore, is nothing more than a collection of families or guilds subject to common rule, i.e. one ruling all, all ruling individuals, or a few ruling all.<sup>28</sup> Following this quote from Bodin – a slight misquote at that, for Bodin had written that a *familia* consists of five persons and a *collegium* of three<sup>29</sup> – Arngrímur concludes that Iceland may be said to have known two types of *res publica*, i.e. of government under common rule: *aristocratia* and *regnum*.<sup>30</sup> These were two of the three types of sovereign rule that Bodin had identified and established to be legitimate forms later on in the same chapter of the *Methodus*: monarchy, the state of optimates and the popular state.<sup>31</sup> More than that, *aristocratia* and *regnum* were the terms implying the rule to be virtuous, and Arngrímur chose to use them to prove the point that the country had prospered equally under both forms of rule.<sup>32</sup> This train of thought is in line with what Bodin had written about the construction of states in his *Les Six Livres de la République*, where he provided similar information and used the same terms to indicate the virtuous kinds of government, not the generic ones.<sup>33</sup> Having thus armed himself with Bodin's theory, Arngrímur applied it to Iceland's situation to make it universally intelligible to his foreign audience: the Icelandic state in *Crymogæa* was modelled on two types of sovereign government described in the *Methodus*, one of them in the past, one of them continuing into the present. The format enabled Arngrímur to keep up with internationally accepted historiography and thought, as well as to deal with the paradoxical situation that he found himself in: writing about a partially independent past from a dependent present.

The coast was clear: now Arngrímur could start writing the country's history without causing offense. The dichotomy between the two types of state that Iceland had known helped him constitute the framework for his description of its history in books two and three, which were dedicated to the eras of aristocratic and royal rule, respectively. It also enabled him to make it very clear that both eras were to be treated on a par; specifically, he devoted just as many pages to the 'lives of assorted famous Icelanders' in the era before the state of dependency as he did providing 'a catalogue of kings whose subjects the Icelanders have been'.<sup>34</sup> To emphasise their equality he built a bridge between the ages of aristocracy and monarchy by stating that between the two eras, there had occurred one form of rule that by Bodin's definition had not been good: oligarchy.<sup>35</sup> Arngrímur's calling the aristocracy 'praiseworthy' highlighted the fact that, given Bodin's ideas about this type of state, the nation had thrived under its rule. It was a safe and modest term to use, for in this context it was redundant to an outsider

and no one would take offense at it. The latter is probably the reason why this passage is the only instance where Arngrímur used a qualitative adjective to denote the era that Icelanders from the twentieth century onwards have sometimes referred to as the *gullöld Íslendinga*, the golden age in the history of Icelanders.<sup>36</sup> In *Crymogæa* Arngrímur did not rank it higher than the era of monarchy, certainly not explicitly. His statement that the oligarchy was *pessimam* and that the aristocracy's demise ultimately left the Icelanders no better or safer way to redeem the situation than by submitting to one king, led readers to draw the same conclusion about Iceland's position as part of a monarchy as they would about its state under aristocratic rule, because *regnum* was also a good kind of government.

The two-state construction provided room for more statements that categorised Iceland's past as having been just as good as its present without giving rise to objections. It actually gave Arngrímur the freedom to profile his country positively, in a modest yet clear way. After having explained the origins of *aristocratia* and *regnum* in Iceland in book one, in book two he went on to write about the famous children that the era of the former had produced. He started off by saying that this account would correct the notion that the Icelandic people had consisted of a band of robbers and a bunch of good-for-nothings: not only were they descended from Norwegian kings and nobility, they had also produced kings and nobility.<sup>37</sup> This statement echoed the tone of his earlier apologetic literature, whose genre and content were known in Denmark; again, a safe remark to make, and having made his point, he went on to back it up with a description of the lives of notable Icelanders. Book three commenced with Arngrímur's pointing out that the Icelanders had been considered friends and allies by the Norwegian kings during that same era, although there had been kings who had attacked the happiness that came with the Icelanders' former autonomy.<sup>38</sup> A glorification of the past, a mourning over the loss of that very autonomy? The intended foreign and learned audience would have regarded the link between *αυτονομία* and *felicitate* from Bodin's point of view, the latter a consequence of the former, and would not have considered the statement to be a glorification of times gone by. Once again, we see that Arngrímur must have known very well what he was doing.

After a brief summary of kings' dealings with Iceland before 1261 and identifying the cause of the era's end, Arngrímur continued with a description of the legal and governmental aspects of monarchy in Iceland and then embarked upon a chronological summary of kings. The job was done: he had made the situation in Iceland universally intelligible from the past into the present, and he had said what he wanted to say. Both remarks at the



beginning of books two and three were minor allusions to a past of great men and to a political state that had been good and had come to an end, in a context within which they could not cause offense: none of it tarnished the image of Iceland under *regnum*, and the intended foreign – read: Danish – audience was bound to agree. In other words, the political boundaries provided by Bodin offered a certain degree of support for singing Iceland's praises, boosting its image and improving others' impression of the country, without overtly doing so.

### The Voice of Iceland: Arngrímur versus Jean Bodin

Arngrímur's decision to focus on his country's political past's continuation into the present provided him with an angle that made the subject acceptable. This perspective also allowed him to construct a literary and ideological framework within which he could work. With the same notion of a continuous Icelandic legacy, Arngrímur then chose another, more specific angle on the level of ideas to profile his country: language. Only this time, instead of agreeing with Bodin, he allowed himself to take a stand that was slightly different from what Bodin had written about changes of language, in order to achieve a focus that would put Iceland on a par with the rest of the world.

According to Bodin, there were three major factors that have an impact on languages: the passage of time, the merging of peoples, and the geography of the area in which a language is spoken.<sup>39</sup> At the end of the third chapter of book one in *Crymogæa* – about the Icelandic language – Arngrímur took the liberty of writing that in the case of the Icelandic language, an exception might be made for the first of the three causes for changes in language, a cause that was destined by fate or inevitable, as he said.<sup>40</sup> To support this statement, he opened the chapter by stating that Icelanders were the only people still to speak unadulterated Old Norse, which he claimed was derived from Gothic, and he devoted the subsequent paragraphs of the chapter to the origin of the Icelandic language, which led up to the main argument for his assertion: that the Icelanders had not allowed their language to be affected by contact with foreigners, unlike the Danes and the Norwegians. Basically, he used Bodin's second argument about the change of languages to make an exception for Iceland in terms of Bodin's first point.<sup>41</sup> He concluded by saying that Icelandic had remained intact so far, but could suffer the same fate as Danish and Norwegian, although not to the same extent or at the same rate.<sup>42</sup>



It was not as if Arngrímur came unprepared to make a case for the purity of Icelandic. As a teacher at the University of Hólar, he was acquainted with medieval Icelandic writings about grammar that had been composed between the middle of the twelfth and the fourteenth century: the four Grammatical Treatises. These texts served a practical purpose: instruction on correct writing and use of language. One of the most influential codices containing these treatises, the *Ormsbók* or *Codex Wormianus*, was owned by his family: first by Guðbrandur Þorláksson, later on by Arngrímur himself. In the chapter on language, Arngrímur referred to the treatises explicitly, and displayed knowledge of the First and (the first part of) the Third Grammatical Treatise explicitly.<sup>43</sup> In other words, he had it on good grounds that historically Icelanders had a grip on their language and had made efforts to maintain it at an early stage, and he had the professional authority to back up the assertion that the Icelandic language may be excused from Bodin's first argument with the aid of the second.

So Arngrímur begged to differ with Bodin, though rather cautiously and minimally, as he used the *potentialis* 'si ... excipias'. This is not nearly as strong as Benediktsson puts it in his Icelandic translation, saying that for Icelandic an exception *had to be made*.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, it's an important difference. Having established Iceland's position as a fully-fledged part of the modern world – or rather the greater Danish empire – in a political-historical sense, on the one hand, Arngrímur also seemed to want to find a way to distinguish Iceland from that same world, on the other hand, in a way that again would be recognisable to his audience. Language was yet another safe bet: stressing the purity of Icelandic, as opposed to that of other Scandinavian languages, and its elegance that could be seen in old writings, should suffice to have it considered a classical language by any early modern scholar – a thought not opposed by Christian IV himself.<sup>45</sup> No one among the readers would or actually could argue with Arngrímur there, not least since the intended readership, the Danish elite, was not likely to know the language.<sup>46</sup> They were bound to be the target audience, since Iceland was part of the Danish realm, within whose boundaries the country was to be profiled. Other than that, the learned Danish had already become acquainted with the legacy of Icelandic medieval literature and with the knowledge of runic script preserved in Iceland through Arngrímur's translations: they would subscribe to Arngrímur's statement that the Icelandic language had persisted unchanged to their day, even if they did not understand the language itself; in this respect, one could almost say that Arngrímur was stating the obvious. Nevertheless, once more he

had picked a suitable means of making a point to profile Iceland that would hardly be visible to his reading audience.

Whether the readership picked up the glove is a point that I will discuss later on. What is important to realise is that Arngrímur wrote about a linguistic legacy that continued into the present and about old writings that proved that the current quality of Iceland's language already existed centuries before, and he gave pointers as to how that quality was to be preserved if the Icelandic language were not to suffer the same fate as other languages had. Any comparison of the history of Latin with the history of Icelandic that Arngrímur supposedly implied does not stand, because in his argumentation, Icelandic, unlike Latin, had never deteriorated to a point where it had to be restored.<sup>47</sup> Could one then still say, as has been done before, that Arngrímur's portrayal of the Icelandic language was intended to have it regarded as 'the Latin of the North'?<sup>48</sup> It would be more appropriate to call it a modern classic, one that had stood the test of time given the evidence provided to prove its continuous purity. A daring thought, because it would mean that Arngrímur placed his own language not only above the other Scandinavian languages, but also above Latin, a 'restored' language in which he himself wrote, and the other classical languages mentioned by Bodin.<sup>49</sup> In conclusion, any paradigm of Arngrímur's for the description of the Icelandic language did not follow what Bodin wrote on the degeneration of Latin.

The notion of continuity enabled Arngrímur to profile Icelandic on a level previously undetected. His approach comprised an appreciation of Icelandic that was not bound to any particular era, from a position of equality or even superiority to other languages. Moreover, the notion of continuity also casts doubt on the thesis that a supposed recognition of Icelandic as a classical language, 'as seen in old writings', would imply a glorification by Arngrímur of the culture and society during the era in which they had come into being, as Jónsson puts it.<sup>50</sup> By no means do we see an explicit glorification; an implicit appreciation is likely, but again, only on the prerogative that that very culture and society *continued to live on*, which, considering the historical-political context that Arngrímur had drawn with Bodin's help, he considered to be the case. In fact, Arngrímur never wrote anything that glorified the era in which the old writings had come into existence as opposed to the age in which he lived. At no point did he make mention of a heyday in the history of the Icelandic language or literature, nor for that matter of a heyday in Icelandic society during which the language flourished. Fine writings were produced during that era, and they proved that the language had been already as elegant then as

it was in his day. No connection, implicit or explicit, between his remark about the language seen in *libris manuscriptis, veteris puritatis et elegantiae refertissimis* and a glorification of the age of *aristocratia* can be detected.

Drawing parallels between the history of the Icelandic state in *Crymogæa* and that of the Roman state in the *Methodus* is problematic for the same reason.<sup>51</sup> Bodin described the changes in the Roman state as a transition from monarchy into tyranny under the Tarquini, followed by transformations from aristocracy into oligarchy and then from democracy into ochlocracy during the so-called age of the Roman republic, and finally from monarchy under Augustus into a tyranny reaching its nadir under Constantine.<sup>52</sup> The Roman *res publica* had come to a definite end, quite shortly after Augustus had gained power, so Bodin wrote.<sup>53</sup> Such a Bodinian 'model' of the rise and fall of the Roman republic, which is suggested to be the model for all Bodin's descriptions of states and changes in government, however does not apply to Arngrímur's description of Iceland; what is more, the model does not exist.<sup>54</sup> Firstly, Bodin provided generic descriptions of *status rerum publicarum* and of changes within them before launching into specific categorisations of various states, starting with Rome.<sup>55</sup> He did not model the description of other states on that of Rome, although he called Rome 'the most famous of all'.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, Arngrímur provided an account of the *Forma Reipublicæ Islandorum*, but no overview of *conversiones imperii* that had taken place in Iceland, as Bodin had for Rome.<sup>57</sup> Thirdly, Rome had known two eras and two different types of sovereign rule during the age between the Tarquini and Augustus, both having taken a turn for the worse, whereas Iceland between 874 and 1261 had known just the one. And last but not least: just as there had been no deterioration in Iceland linguistically, according to Arngrímur, there had been no final demise politically either: having become a part of a *regnum* had given Iceland an ending as happy as could be, unlike the fate that Bodin's Rome had suffered. Bodin used the term *res publica* in the generic sense to denote the three types of sovereign government, and Arngrímur followed suit: his *res publica Islandorum* referred both to the era of *aristocratia* and to the era of *regnum*, not just to the former.<sup>58</sup> Arngrímur's *res publica Islandorum* was still intact: it was no invention of his to denote a state that the country had known in the past, but an invention to point out the continuity of that state, be it with a little dip. Was Arngrímur saying that Iceland had done better than 'the most famous of all states' and all the other states whose ultimate fall Bodin had described? Another daring thought. On the practical side of things, he obviously also could not have recounted a fall of the *res publica Islandorum* had he wanted to, not to a Danish audience and not in a book dedicated to their king. If Iceland

had done better than Rome or any other state, it was thanks to the – now Danish – monarchy. He could argue that Iceland was better than Rome and all the rest and have his readership take his argumentation at face value, because they would accept it based on Bodin's theories. In other words, it provided Arngrímur with yet another means to say what he wanted to say without explicitly saying it and without causing a royal stir.

One thing is clear: a comparison by Arngrímur of the course of events in Rome as described by Bodin to those in Iceland between 874 and 1261-63 is not even implicit: it is not there.<sup>59</sup> Arngrímur had taken Bodin's pointers about the description of history to heart and used his general ideas about types of and changes in government to construct his story. His description of the situation in Norway at the time of King Haraldur hárfagri in book one, chapter two, leading Ingólfur Arnarson and Hjörleifur Hróðmarsson to flee his rule and go to Iceland, served as a springboard to describe the first half of the two-state construction. His aforementioned one-off mentioning of the *pessimam oligarchiam* at the end of book two, leading to the assumption of power by Norwegian king Hákon Hákonarson in 1261-63, served as the bridge to describing the second half of the construction. There does exist a parallel between Bodin's description of Rome and Arngrímur's description of Iceland regarding the cyclical nature of societies moving from one political form into another, as observed by Benediktsson.<sup>60</sup> Other than that, any resemblance to the events in Rome described by Bodin is coincidental.<sup>61</sup>

## The Aftermath

Continuity is the key with which Arngrímur unlocked the gateway to having Iceland's history internationally understood and acknowledged and to profiling the country within contemporary limits. Continuity allowed him to set the Icelandic state and its language apart from the rest of the world, i.e. the Danish realm, whilst staying within the boundaries of that very realm. It leaves little room for upholding the idea that Arngrímur wrote about an imaginary *gullöld* during which Iceland had been a free state and the language and culture had prospered. Not once in *Crymogæa* is a golden age in Icelandic history mentioned as such by Arngrímur, not once does he glorify Iceland's medieval past: the age of *aristocratia* had been a good one, as was the age of *regnum*, and the reader could fill in the rest, *if so desired*. We have to conclude that there is no active glorification of 'the age of independence' in the Middle Ages: at most there is an implicit appreciation. With uncanny craftsmanship, Arngrímur chose the safe way out on every

point that he was trying to convey, or rather: he used Bodin to do so, mostly *ex positivo* and a little *ex negativo*. His craft was that he kept a steady balance between the past and the present: the past was something good, and the present was the best present that could ever be, because it was *just as good*. Across the board, he proved himself to be a worthy representative of early modern historiography and early modern thought: his work professed an early modern kind of self-awareness, and a very strong one at that, which proved itself by being universally recognisable, yet specifically Icelandic in the one respect in which it could be: language. And this was all because it suited the political situation so very well.

In doing so, Arngrímur succeeded in sketching a history that placed Iceland on the map of global history with the aid of Bodin, though not following the route modern academics have generally believed him to take. In *Brevis Commentarius*, the aim of writing the work had been that of a polemic, a defence, and there does not seem to have been any need to choose one specific perspective – the focus certainly was not on language. *Crymogæa*, however, was a national historiography meant to hold its ground with foreign historiographical works, written in the exceptional circumstance of a state of dependency, and it required more specific angles to procure its publication and its reception by an audience situated on the other side of the governmental infrastructure. The angles chosen, the historical-political perspective in general and language in particular, were not only very functional ones on multiple levels, as we have seen, they would also turn out to be important ones with long-lasting effect, not least because they continued to provide Icelandic historiographers with a framework with which to establish a profile for the country and its history – as well as for themselves – for years to come, even if they needed a little time to discover the text.<sup>62</sup>

Now the question remains: did the Danish accede to it? The answer is yes. Since its publication in 1609, *Crymogæa* has enjoyed a favourable reception. It provided foreign authors with information about Iceland that they could use and reproduce.<sup>63</sup> The Danes Ole Worm and Stephanus Johannis Stephanus gratefully used Arngrímur's work to support their own. The interest of Worm was in documenting Norse antiquities to uncover the roots of Danish culture, and *Crymogæa* provided him with information about runes that he used for his first book about runes, *Fasti Danici*, written in 1626.<sup>64</sup> Stephanus, who later became royal historiographer, set out to describe the Danish realm in its entirety and reproduced book one of *Crymogæa* integrally in his work *De Regno Daniæ et Norvegiæ insulisque adjacentibus juxta ac de Holsatia, ducatu Sleswicensi et finitimis provinciis tractatus vari*

of 1629, which consisted of eight treatises describing the realm.<sup>65</sup> Neither knew Icelandic, and Arngrímur's work provided them with material they needed in Latin: information about the runes and Icelandic sources supplementing the work of Saxo Grammaticus. Both started corresponding with Arngrímur after their books had been published, and what ensued was mutual appreciation and support of each other's work until the end of Arngrímur's life.<sup>66</sup> His knowledge was valued, and his work had achieved its goal: Iceland had been put on the map of the greater Danish realm, his work had in no way been detrimental to the notion of that realm, and a peaceful coexistence – at least on paper – with the learned Danish was the consequence. This coexistence would last until the early nineteenth century, when the renowned Danish philologist Rasmus Christian Rask used Arngrímur's description of the origin and the original state of the Icelandic language in his *Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse* of 1818, defining the concept of Icelandic as a classical language more explicitly than Arngrímur himself had ever done.<sup>67</sup> Rask's recognition of Arngrímur's work was the ultimate proof that Arngrímur had accomplished his goal among the Danish, and he had done it by constituting a linguistic identity for Iceland that no one could deny. The cherry on the cake must have been the fact that the Danish king had facilitated and paid for it.

## Notes

1. This article is the second in a series of articles that aim to investigate contemporary thought in Icelandic texts written between the Middle Ages and the twenty-first century, in order to map the development of Icelandic self-awareness during that period. It is the sequel to Kim P. Middel, 'Alexanders Saga. Classical Ethics in Iceland's Alexander Epic', *Viator* 45/1 (2014), 121–48. I would like to express profound thanks to Martin Gosman and Dirk Jan Wolffram at the University of Groningen for their ongoing support and constructive criticism, and to thank Gottskálk Þór Jónsson at the University of Iceland for his comments.
2. Although there are many sagas whose earliest extant manuscripts date from the fifteenth century, there is general consensus that no original material was produced after appr. 1400. For *rímur* poetry, see Ole Worm's *correspondence with Icelanders*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1948), XXVI.
3. The text editions used are *Arngrimi Jonae Opera Latine Conscripta*, vol. 2, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1951) and Jean Bodin,

- Oeuvres Philosophiques*, ed. and trans. Pierre Mesnard (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1951). Translations are my own.
4. Betty Wahl, *Isländisch. Sprachplanung und Sprachpurismus* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008), 53-4; Jakob Benediktsson, 'Arngrímur lærði og íslensk málhreinsun', in Halldór Guðmundsson et al. (eds.), *Lærdómslistir* (1953; repr. Reykjavík: Mál og Menning 1987), 47-68, at 47.
  5. For the use of the term 'golden age' in connection with *Crymogæa* and the comparison of Iceland with Rome, see Gottskálk Þór Jensson, 'Söguleysa þjóðlegrar sagnfræði. Íslensk þjóðerni og evrópsk latínumenning', in Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson et al. (eds.), *Þjóðerni í þúsund ár?* (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 2003), 57-71, at 64-5, 69; Gunnar Karlsson, 'Íslensk þjóðernisvitund á óþjóðlegrum öldum', *Skírnir* 173 (1999), 141-78, at 160-1; Gunnar Karlsson, 'Syrpa um þjóðernisumræðu', *Skírnir* 178 (2004), 153-201, at 165; Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson, 'Greatness Revived. The Latin Dissemination of the Icelandic Past', 2002: [www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/GermLat/Acta/Svavarsson.htm](http://www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/GermLat/Acta/Svavarsson.htm) (accessed September 2014); Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson, 'Hugmynd um sjálfstæði Íslendinga', *Skírnir* 180 (2006), 261-93, at 270.
  6. The first is an anonymous history of Iceland called *Qualiscunque Descriptio Islandiæ*, written around 1588-89 and ascribed to Bishop Oddur Einarsson. See Jakob Benediktsson, 'Hver samdi Qualiscunque Descriptio Islandiæ?', in Guðmundsson et al. (eds.), *Lærdómslistir*, 87-97, at 92.
  7. See *Arngrimi Jonae Opera Latine Conscripta*, vol. 4, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1957), 32.
  8. Wilhelm Seelmann, 'Gories Peerse's Gedicht Van Island', *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Niederdeutsche Sprachforschung. Jahrgang 1883*, 9 (Leipzig: D. Soltau, 1884), 110-25, at 121-3: 'Overst Horerye und Ehebrock ys dar sehr gemein' (121); 'Wenn se einen Dúdeschen kónen bedregen sehr, Dat achten se nicht vor eine unehr' (121); 'Se sitten und brummen alse Baren und Hunde' (123).
  9. Sumarliði Ísleifsson, *Ísland framandi land* (Reykjavík: Mál og Menning, 1996), 38. He also points out that some have suggested that the poem was meant to retaliate against Icelanders with whom Peerse had done business and had had negative experiences.
  10. *Arngrimi Jonae Opera Latine Conscripta*, vol. 1, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1950), 6-7: 'In lucem exiit circa annum Christi 1561 Hamburgi fætus valde deformis ... Rhythmi videlicet Germanici, omnium qui unquam leguntur spurcissimi et mendacissimi in gentem Islandicam' ... Quare hoc tempore author eram honesto studioso, Arngrimo Ionæ F., ut revolutis scriptorium monimentis (*sic*), qui de Islandiâ aliquid scripserunt, errores et mendacia solidis rationibus detegeret'. 'Around the year of Christ 1561 a monstrosity saw the light of day in Hamburg ... that is, some verses in German, the most degrading and untruthful of all things ever to be read about the Icelandic people ... For this reason I was the one who at that time urged an honest scholar named Arngrímur Jónsson to go through the writ-



- ten legacy of those who ever wrote about Iceland, and then to expose all misconceptions and lies by solid reasoning’.
11. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 4, 11-4.
  12. Carl Pedersen, *Afhandlinger til Dansk Bog- og Bibliotekshistorie* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1949), 67. Huitfeldt seemed to have been material in this payment. According to Sigurðsson, it was a king’s ransom: worth more than seven cows; see Haraldur Sigurðsson, ‘Arngrímur Jónsson lærði’, *Lesbók Morgunblaðsins*, 43, No. 42 (1968), 10-3, at 11.
  13. This letter is preserved at the Norwegian Riksarkivet in the archives of the Danske Kanselli, section *Indlæg til Norske Registre vedr. Bohuslen, Island, Færøerne og Grønland 1572-1799*, Vol. 2 (1588-1596), 275b-276a.
  14. Ibid., section *Indlæg til Norske Tegnelse vedr. Bohuslen, Island, Færøerne og Grønland 1572-1714*, Vol. 2 (1588-1596), 367b-368a.
  15. *Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta and Supplementum Historiæ Norvagiæ*.
  16. This would change later during his reign, *vide* the work of Stephanius from 1629.
  17. See Charlotte Appel, *Læsning og Bokmarked i 1600-tallets Danmark* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001), 381.
  18. Hiram Morgan, ‘The Island Defenders: Humanist Patriots in Early Modern Iceland and Ireland’, in Guðmundur Hálfðanarson et al. (eds.), *Nations and Nationalities in Historic Perspective* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2001), 223-44, at 225. Censorship regulations of 1562 and 1576 do not mention Latin texts, where earlier ones had; see Appel, *Læsning*, 383-85.
  19. Pedersen, *Afhandlinger*, 65; Appel, *Læsning*, 398-400.
  20. *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera Latine Conscripita*, vol. 2, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1951), 5.
  21. Appel, *Læsning*, 403. Venusin himself and Niels Krag had actually informed Arngrímur about Resen’s appointment as a professor of theology in 1597, so Arngrímur would have known that he was the one to turn to; Björn Kornrup, *Biskop Hans Poulsen Resen* Vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 1928), 201.
  22. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 4, 44.
  23. Harald Ilsøe, *Bogtrykkerne i København og deres Virksomhed ca. 1600-1800* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1992), 39.
  24. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 4, 44-5. This would also account for the fact that in 1606, Arngrímur did not find a printer for his work about Greenland, *Gronlandia*, a copy of which was sent to Resen as well.
  25. In his work *Apotribe virulentæ et atrocis calumniæ*, Arngrímur mentions having been rewarded by Christian IV for his works that had been ‘written for the good of the fatherland’ and had been dedicated to the king; see *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera Latine Conscripita*, vol. 3, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1952), 58: ‘quod opuscula mea, Patriæ bono publicata, Regiæ suæ Majestati Sereniss. dicari clementer permiserit ac me munificè ornaverit’. ‘The fact that His Serene Royal Highness kindly allowed



me to dedicate my humble works, published for the good of the Fatherland, to him and that he rewarded me lavishly'. It seems highly plausible that *Patriæ* refers to Iceland – it is mentioned explicitly elsewhere (*vide infra*) – and that Jakob Benediktsson was right in suggesting that the remark concerns *Brevis Commentarius* and *Crymogæa*; see *Opera*, vol. 4, 182. Arngrímur himself refers to *Brevis Commentarius* and *Crymogæa* as *opuscula*, *libella* and *opella* in *Crymogæa*; see *Opera*, vol. 2, 5: 'Hoc itaque Opusculum ... sibi dicari permittat ...' 'This humble work ... Your Majesty allowed to be dedicated to himself'; *ibid.*, 8: 'Edideram ... Libellum pro Patriâ meâ Islandiâ ... De quâ Opella nostrâ ...' 'I had published a little book for my Fatherland Iceland ... About this minor effort of mine ...' Interestingly, in the dedication of *Crymogæa* to King Christian Arngrímur referred to *Brevis Commentarius* as a payment of 'small tithes' and to *Crymogæa* as a payment of 'great tithes', 'paid' by him to the king out of respect for the king's support and patronage of his work. It makes one wonder if, by referring to *Crymogæa* as 'great tithes', he was hoping for a proportionally larger reward!

26. Appel, *Læsning*, 368.
27. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 54: 'Sequitur ejusdem forma Reip. et Constitutio: ex qua demum patebit, an audacter nimis vel abusivè Reip. et civitatis appellationem hoc loco adhibeamus, eò quod urbes non habeant Islandi. Quibus pro me respondebit Io. Bodinus, Method. Hist. cap. 6.' 'What follows is the form and nature of said State: from this it will become evident whether I have attached the label "State" and "polity" to this place too audaciously or improperly, since the Icelanders do not have cities. Bodin will answer these questions on my behalf in Chapter 6 of his *Methodus*.'
28. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 54: 'Familiâ, inquit, tres personas, collegium quinque eodem imperio domestico contentas complectitur. Respublica autem ex pluribus conflata familiis (aut collegiis) etiamsi locis ac sedibus à se invicem divelluntur, modò sint in unius imperii tutelâ; sive unus imperet omnibus, sive singulis universi, sive pauci universis etc.' 'A family, he says, comprises three persons under common domestic rule, a guild five. A State, then, is made up of multiple families (or guilds), even if they live in different regions or residences, as long as they are safeguarded by common rule; that either one rules all, or all the individuals, or a few all, etc.' The last sentence is almost a literal reproduction of Bodin; see Jean Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 169, lines 6–11.
29. Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 168: 'Is enim quindecim personas populum constituere scribit: id est quinque collegia vel tres familias: sic enim familia quinque personas, collegia tres complectetur. Tres ergo plurésve familiæ, aut quinque plurave collegia Rempublicam constituunt, si legitima imperii potestate simul conjungantur ...' 'He wrote that fifteen persons constitute a people: that is to say, five guilds or three families, since a family consists of five persons and a guild of three. Thus three or more families or five or more

guilds constitute a State, provided they are united at one point under the lawful power of rule ...'

Ibid., 169: 'Ex quo illud efficitur, ut Respublica nihil aliud sit, quàm familiarum, aut collegiorum sub unum & idem imperium subjecta multitudo'. 'From this follows that a State is nothing other than a number of families or guilds subjected to common rule.'

30. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 55: 'Hunc igitur Reip. certis legibus conformatae statum bipartitò secabimus, nempe in Aristocratiam et Regnum sive Regiam potestatem'. 'Therefore we will divide the type of State, as ratified by certain laws, into two groups, i.e. into Aristocracy and Monarchy or royal authority'.
31. Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 177: 'Ex quo etiam planum fit, imperii summi jus in his præcipuè versari. Prius igitur in omni Republica intuendum est, quis imperium magistratibus dare & adimere, quis leges jubere aut abrogare possit. utrum unus, an minor pars civium, an major ... Nihil enim quantum esse at ne cogitari quidem potest'. 'What's more, from this it becomes clear that the right to sovereign rule is particularly subject to these matters. Thus in every state attention must first be paid to the question of who can give authority to magistrates and also take it from them, and who can ratify laws and repeal them: one single citizen, or a small part of the citizenship, or a larger one ... there can be no fourth kind, nor can one be conceived for that matter'.
32. In the *Methodus*, Bodin had indicated that it would be preferable to use the generic terms to understand types of government, rather than those indicating their being good or bad, such as *aristocratia*; *ibid.*: 'hunc igitur statum optimatum dicemus aut popularem (his verbis utamur, ne specie virtutis ac vitiorum Aristocratiae, Oligarchiae, Democratiae, & Ochlocratiae appellationibus sæpius uti cogamur)'. 'Let us therefore refer to the type of government as one of optimates, or a popular one (we should use these terms, so that we are not forced to use too epithets based on the good or bad nature of states, such as Aristocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy and Ochlocracy, too often)'.
33. Jean Bodin, *De Republica Libri Sex* (Paris: Dupuys, 1586), 174-5: 'Ac si quidem penes est vnum Reipublicae totius summa, Monarchiam appellabimus: si penes vniuersos Democratiam: si penes paucos Aristocratiam', 'If the highest authority over an entire State resides in one man, we shall call it a Monarchy; if it resides in all men, a Democracy; if it resides in a few men, an Aristocracy' (174); 'tria tantum Rerumpublicarum genera Monarchiam, inquam Aristocratiam, & Democratiam constituemus', 'we come to the conclusion that there are only three kinds of states: that is to say Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy' (175).
34. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 98, 161: 'Aliquot celebrium Islandorum vitas continens', 'Containing the lives of assorted famous Icelanders' (98); 'Regum quibus paruerunt hactenus Islandi catalogum continens, cum aliis non-

- nullis memorabilibus'. 'Containing a catalogue of kings whose subjects the Icelanders have been up to the present day, along with several other memorable persons' (161).
35. Ibid., vol. 2, 164-5: 'Etenim sub ipsum mutandæ Reipub. tempus laudabilis illa Islandiæ Aristocratia in pessimam Oligarchiam transformari cæpit ... Nec enim alia visa est incolis pacandæ Reipub. expeditior, nec magis tuta ratio, quam si tam Magnates quam plebs unius Regis imperio coërcerentur'. 'For prior to the change of State, Iceland's praiseworthy Aristocracy turned into the worst kind of Oligarchy ... No plan for bringing back peace to their State seemed more agreeable or sound to the Icelanders – both chieftains and common men – than to submit to the rule of one king'.
36. See, *inter alia*, Karlsson, 'Íslensk þjóðernisvitund', 160-1.
37. Ibid., vol. 2, 98: 'dicendum quos qualesve alumnos tulerit hæc Respublica ... ut vel hinc conticescant, qui gentem nostram Latronum collegium et nebulonum colluviem tantum fuisse calumniari soliti sunt ... Asserimus igitur præcipuos Islandiæ incolas et gentis nostræ conditores ... non solum Regum, Ducum, Baronum et Nobilium sanguine progenitos ac ortos, sed etiam Reges nonnullos, Duces, Barones, Nobiles eisdem oriundos'. 'Which and what kind of sons this State has brought forth now needs to be mentioned ... so that they who are still in the habit of slandering our nation by saying that it consists of nothing but a band of robbers and a bunch of good-for-nothings, will hold their tongues ... We therefore declare that Iceland's notable inhabitants and the founding fathers of our nation ... were not only the progeny of kings, earls, barons and noblemen, but also that actually quite a few kings, earls, barons and noblemen were to be their descendants'.
38. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 161: 'à vicinis Norvegiæ Regibus ... ut socii et amici colebantur. Interim tamen horum felicitati in libera illa αὐτονομίᾳ potissimum sitæ à diversis Norvegiæ Regibus diversis temporibus insidiatum esse depræhendimus'. 'They were considered allies and friends by the neighbouring kings of Norway. Still, we have observed that at various points in time the happiness that, above all, came with the freedom of αὐτονομίᾳ was under attack by various Norwegian kings'.
39. Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 244-5: 'Sed mutationes linguarum tribus potissimum de causis ... fieri consueverunt. Una est in ipso decursu temporum, quibus non modo linguæ, sed etiam res omnes immutantur, ac tota rerum natura senescit ... Altera causa est in coloniarum ac populorum inter ipsos confusione ... Postrema linguæ mutandæ causa in ipsa regionis natura versatur'. 'But changes in languages usually happen for three reasons: one lies in the passage of time itself, which causes change not only in languages, but in all things, and due to which the whole nature of things ages ... The second cause lies in the mingling of colonists and peoples with each other ... The last cause of change in a language is subject to the very nature of a region'.

40. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 30: 'Porro eâ lingvâ, olim Danica et Norvegica dicta, solos Islandos uti integrâ dicebam, si primam et fatalem seu necessariam illam mutationis lingvarum causam excipias'. 'Therefore, as I have said before, the Icelanders are alone in employing this language, which was once called Danish and Norse, unadulterated, if an exception can be made for the first and fated, yet inevitable cause of change in languages'.
41. Ibid., vol. 2, 30: 'Sic Parthos Persicum, Arabes Punicum, ... idioma mutasse præter alios etiam Iohannes Bodinus affirmat: Meth.hist'. 'Likewise Bodin in his *Methodus* asserts that among others, the Parthians caused a change to the Persian language, the Arabs to the Punic language ...'. Arngrímur is referring to a passage in chapter nine of the *Methodus*, which he had just paraphrased almost literally; Bodin, *Oeuvres*, 245.
42. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 30: 'Id quod etiam nostræ lingvæ ex parte aliqua accidere posse non imus inficias: sed nequaquam tanto discrimine aut tam paucorum annorum intervallo'. 'Still we do not deny that the same fate could befall our own language to some extent, though by no means as drastically or as quickly'.
43. Ibid., vol. 2, 27: 'Circa annum Domini 1216 scripsit quidam nostratium de literis lingvæ vernaculæ sermone patrio, ubi veteres istos characteres huic lingvæ proprios affirmat, utrosque tam veteres quam novos legitimâ tractatione persequitur per suas definitiones et divisiones literarum in vocales et consonantes, facitque ex quinque vocalibus latinis octodecim suæ lingvæ sono et pronuntiatione distinctas'. 'Around the year 1216, one of our countrymen wrote a treatise in the mother tongue about the letters of our language, in which he declares that the old characters are this language's own, then to discuss both kinds of characters – old and new – appropriately by their definitions and their subdivisions in vowels and consonants, and to make up eighteen vowels – distinguished by sound and pronunciation – in his own language from only five Latin ones'. For further information on Arngrímur's use of the Treatises, see Ibid., vol. 4, 102; Tarrin Wills, *The Foundation of Grammar. An Edition of the First Section of Ólafur Þórðarson's Grammatical Treatise*, 2001: <http://homepages.abdn.ac.uk/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/wago17/mg-new.cgi?t=1&idl=1&nf=1&w=go&w=in.3> (accessed September 2014).
44. *Crymogæa. Ættir úr Sógu Íslands*, trans. Jakob Benediktsson (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1985), 104: 'En um þessa tungu ... verður þó að undanskilja hina fyrstu og lögbundnu eða óhjákvæmilegu orsök allra breytinga tungumála'. 'But about this language ... an exception has to be made for the first and statutory or inevitable cause of all changes in languages'.
45. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 30: '... in libris manuscriptis, veteris puritatis et elegantiae refertissimis'. '... in manuscripts filled to the brim with the purity and elegance of old'. In Christian's letters to Arngrímur and the Icelanders, he refers to the literary 'antiquities ... in our land Iceland' ('Antiquiteter ... paa wortt land Issland'), and he did not oppose the identification of

- Icelandic with the language of runic inscriptions as part of a Danish past; see Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, *Historiography at the Court of Christian IV* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002), 24.
46. For examples, see, *inter alia*, Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 4, 73.
  47. For this comparison, see Gottskálk Þór Jensson, 'The Latin of the North', *Renæssanceforum. Tidsskrift for Renæssanceforskning* [online] 5 (2008), 1-28, at 19-20: [www.renaessanceforum.dk/5\\_2008/gj.pdf](http://www.renaessanceforum.dk/5_2008/gj.pdf) (accessed September 2014).
  48. I need to point out here that the term 'the Latin of the North' is a modern invention: Jensson has researched the provenience of the term extensively and dates it as recently as 1961; Gottskálk Þór Jensson, 'Latína Norðursins', in J.B. Sigtrygsson et al. (eds.), *Aravísur sungnar Ara Páli Kristjánssyni 28. September 2010* (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnúsen, 2010), 13-8, at 16.
  49. Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 244-5.
  50. Gottskálk Þór Jensson, 'Puritas nostræ linguæ: upphaf íslenskrar málhrein-sunar í latneskum húmanisma', *Skírnir* 177 (2003), 37-67, at 56.
  51. For this parallel, see Jensson, 'Latin', 21.
  52. Bodin, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 201. By the term 'Roman republic', I mean the era between 509 and 27 BC; the word 'republic' here is not to be confused with Bodin's and Arngrímur's *res publica*.
  53. Ibid.: 'hinc variè ab optimis principibus, mox etiam à tyrannis suscepta'. 'After this time the State was ruled by outstanding emperors in various ways, yet it did not take long before tyrants took over'.
  54. For this model, see Gottskálk Þór Jensson, 'Jean Bodin på Island. Humanisten Arngrímur Jónssons brug af Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem (Paris, 1566)', *Renæssanceforum. Tidsskrift for Renæssanceforskning* [online] 1 (2005), 1-10, at 6: [www.renaessanceforum.dk/rf\\_1\\_2005.htm](http://www.renaessanceforum.dk/rf_1_2005.htm) (accessed September 2014).
  55. The full description of *status rerum republicanarum* is at the beginning of book six of Bodin's *Methodus: Oeuvres Philosophiques*, 167-77. For the generic description of changes in states: *ibid.*, 195-201.
  56. Ibid., 201: 'Omnium autem clarissima fertur esse Romanorum'. 'The most famous of all States, though, is said to be that of the Romans'.
  57. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 54.
  58. Árni Daníel Júlíússon, 'Icelandic Sagas Around 1600. Reception, Interpretation and Context' (2002), 1-14, at 9: [https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10900/46199/pdf/7\\_arni~1.pdf](https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10900/46199/pdf/7_arni~1.pdf) (accessed September 2014).
  59. These dates are the ones that Arngrímur mentions; Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 2, 169-71. Historically, the period is 1262-64; Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 years* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000), 83-6.
  60. Arngrímur, *Opera*, vol. 4, 54.

61. Interestingly, Arngrímur wrote about Haraldur hárfagri that his violence was commonly not condemned by historians, as it had put an end to two forms of negative government, oligarchy and ochlocracy. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 21.
62. These were Þórður Þorláksson (1666), Þormóður Torfason (1711) and Finnur Jónsson (1772-78); see Svavarsson, 'Greatness Revived'.
63. A concise reproduction of book one of *Crymogæa* was also presented in Samuel Purchas's work *Hakbyttus Posthumus or Pvrchas his Pilgrimes* (London: H. Fetherstone, 1625), part 3, Ch. 3, 654-68. Purchas's work was a collection of travel stories and descriptions of countries and their inhabitants. It belongs to the genre of early modern travel literature and therefore bears no relevance to Iceland's position in the Danish realm, but still it is interesting to see that *Crymogæa* was also received in England as early as 1625. Also, Arngrímur as an Icelandic historian was mentioned in the famous encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert: *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Vol. 8 (Neufchatel: Faulche, 1765), 916.
64. Ole Worm, *Fasti Danici. Universam tempora computandi rationem antiquitus in Dania et Vicinis regionibus observatam libri tres* (Copenhagen: Salomon Sartorius, 1626).
65. Stephanus Johannis Stephanius, *De Regno Daniæ et Norvegiæ insulisque adjacentibus juxta ac de Holsatia, ducatu Sleswicensi et finitimis provinciis tractatus varii* (Leiden: Elzevier, 1629). The treatise about Iceland is called 'De Islandicæ gentis primordiis et veteri respublica'.
66. They supported Arngrímur in a dispute with royal historian Johannes Pontanus about the refutation in *Crymogæa* that Iceland was to be identified with Thule; see Skovgaard-Petersen, *Historiography*, 58-9.
67. Rasmus Christian Rask, *Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1818), 72: 'Denne store gotiske Sprogklasse, synes, eftersom dens ene Del ikke vel kan være oprunden af den anden, at have en fælles Oprindelse, har man funden den, saa har man funden Islandskens Udspring og omvendt.'



## 6 The Low Countries

Constitution, Nationhood and Character according to Hugo Grotius

*Jan Waszink*

In their mission statement the organisers of this conference profess their intention to challenge the widely accepted wisdom that concepts of nation and nationality in the way we understand them are only from the second half of the eighteenth century. It is obvious from almost every branch of art and intellectual thought that national sentiments achieved enormous prominence and flowering in Europe in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the view that nationality and the nation-state are typically nineteenth-century developments has achieved almost canonical status among historians. Given the rules of the historian's trade, which prescribe a constant, critical self-evaluation of the historical discipline, this means that it is time to scrutinise our treatment of these concepts, as is the aim of the present volume. For indeed, the premodern sources provide many grounds for tracing the origins of ideas and sentiments of nationality back to at least the early modern period, if not further.

Early modern texts abound with geographical characterisations that correspond roughly with the nation-states of modern Europe. Human character types attracted a great deal of attention in early modern literature; there is even a separate branch of early modern literature devoted to it, of which we will see one example later on in this article. 'National' character figures prominently among the character types in this literature.

On the other hand, there are many reasons for caution, for the differences with present-day perceptions and conceptualisations of nationhood are pervasive and fundamental, and have not by coincidence led to the view referred to above. To quote an example from the recent inaugural oration by Geert Janssen in Amsterdam: in spite of the enormous number of immigrants in Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the cohabitation of people from so many ethnic and geographical backgrounds does not seem to have caused any serious problems; indeed this cohabitation is rarely referred to or conceptualised explicitly in the sources.<sup>1</sup> Religious affiliations, for example, seem to have been far more important to contemporary observers than the category of nationhood or 'national' background. Secondly, the early modern perception of nationhood must have been very



different from ours and not, or at least to a much lesser degree, tied to the nation-*state* in its various aspects.

With respect to method this means, to state the obvious, that a critical study of original sources will be crucial to this re-evaluation of our histories of nationhood and nationality. If we are to make any progress, we should turn to the primary materials and to the things that the sources themselves tell us and how they tell us. In a historical debate with potential repercussions on current political debates and sentiments, it is particularly vital to strive for, and depart from, the most factually reliable interpretation of the past 'on its own terms'. Otherwise our research will not be able to fulfill what is arguably its most important role in society in the present (and which is difficult enough to achieve in any case), i.e. to prevent social and political debate from falling into the pitfalls of *Hineininterpretierung* and confusing present with past concerns and perceptions. To study the past on its own terms is not a concern for irrelevant academics in secluded libraries, but the fulfillment of a desire for truth which should inform every current social and political debate that involves historical information.

In this chapter I shall look at some early-seventeenth-century perceptions of 'Dutch' or Low Countries' nationhood. My main source will be Hugo Grotius's various utterances that relate to this question. I will look at two of his works in particular, the well-known *De Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavicae*, or 'De oudheid van de Bataafse nu Hollandse Republiek', published in 1610, and Grotius's less well-known *Annales*, the first part of the *Annales et Historiae*, or 'Chronicle' of the Dutch Revolt, written between 1601 and 1612. Although these works were composed by the same author at roughly the same time, they do not profess precisely the same view regarding what Grotius considers to be 'his' nation.

In order to draw some conclusions from the information from Grotius we need at least one external point of reference to confront it with. Therefore I shall briefly discuss the views on nationhood in general and the Low Countries in particular as expressed in the Scotsman John Barclay's *Icon Animorum* of 1614, a text from the character literature that I referred to earlier that also discussed 'national' characters.

## Backgrounds

The States of Holland were the sovereign assembly that acted as ruler of the province of Holland. Holland in turn was the leading province in a confederation made up of seven nominally independent provinces that had

very recently emerged out of a rebellion against their former overlord, who was the distant successor of the original counts or dukes, whose territories had passed, in most cases through the hands of the dukes of Burgundy in the fifteenth century, into the hands of the Habsburg world empire in the sixteenth century. Discontent among the nobility, the towns and the populace regarding the Habsburg civil and religious policies from the 1560s onwards had led to a revolt.

The constitutional justification for this resistance was the claim that in each of the provinces of the Low Countries the Habsburg ruler had no more formal power than the original count or duke whose rights he had inherited. This meant, in the eyes of the towns, the nobility and the provinces, that the Habsburg ruler had to respect the limitations set upon his power by the medieval charters or 'privileges' and had to uphold and defend the specific rights of individual provinces, towns and noble families that were inscribed in these privileges. In the famous *Joyous Entry* of Brabant, a restatement and extension of the privileges signed by Duchess Joanna at her accession in 1356, a clause was even introduced that should the duke violate any of the conditions formulated in the charter, his subjects would be exempt from their duty to obedience until the violation was corrected. This clause was later extended to apply in all provinces in the Burgundian and Habsburg Netherlands as well.

The later Burgundian rulers and their Habsburg successors, especially Philip II, sought to centralise political, judicial and fiscal authority, and this drive clashed with the preservation of the 'ancient' privileges. For example, Philip II imposed taxation without the prior consent of the provinces (the '10th penny'); he imposed a special court for the prosecution of heresy (the Inquisition) that violated the time-honoured rights of the individual towns in the Low Countries to judge their own citizens by their own local courts, even if they were accused somewhere else; and he appointed non-Netherlanders from his own service to offices that were not open to foreigners, thus also frustrating the ambitions of Netherlandish noblemen. The towns, nobility and provinces argued that these and similar acts constituted a violation that invoked the above-mentioned clause on disobedience, and that moreover by this violation the ruler had acted against the interests of his subjects, instead of protecting them as 'a good father protecting his children'. This in turn, they argued, meant that his regime had become a tyranny against which armed resistance was justified.

The Deposition (*Verlatinge*) of 1581 by the rebellious provinces assembled in their own States-General officially declared Philip II stripped of his power. For the time being, until a new sovereign or a new form of government

was found, the provincial States of the various provinces acted as sovereign powers. Only matters relating to all the provinces together, such as those concerning the war against the former overlord or the appointment of the stadholder, were dealt with by the States-General as the representative assembly of the individual provinces; this level wielded sovereign powers only by delegation from the provincial level. For difficult decisions, delegates to the Generalty had to confer first with their colleagues at home, which could turn the decision-making process in the States-General into a (very) lengthy affair. The office of the stadholder (formerly the ruler's representative when he was elsewhere in his large agglomerate realm) was continued and invested with powers including the supreme military command and certain judicial authority. Moreover, many provinces shared the same stadholder. In matters of war, except the declaration of war and peace, the stadholders enjoyed a great degree of independence. This enabled, in particular, the Nassau commanders William Louis and Maurice to develop a modern and singularly effective army organisation, which from circa 1590 gave the cooperating provinces the upper hand in the war against Habsburg. In 1609 the Habsburg rulers accepted the conclusion of a truce for twelve years with the United Provinces as if they were a sovereign power. This event established the provinces as a *de facto* – but not (yet) *de iure* – new sovereign power on the European political stage.<sup>2</sup>

However, even from the early stages of the Revolt, serious differences of opinion regarding the most desirable political and religious organisation existed within the emerging confederate republic. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of a new state on the European stage, and a republic at that, was unheard of, and constituted one of the great political and historical marvels of the time.

## Hugo Grotius

Such a new commonwealth needed an account of its history and legitimacy presented in a grand manner for an international audience. The humanist prodigy Hugo Grotius (Hugo de Groot, 1583-1645) was an obvious candidate to produce this piece. Born in Delft in 1583, he proceeded to the University at Leiden at the early age of eleven. He became one of the star students of the university, a pupil of Joseph Scaliger and concluded his studies in Leiden with the publication of editions of two classical texts and his inclusion as part of an official government embassy to the king of France in 1598. Back in The Hague he embarked on a legal career, first as a lawyer, from

1607 as the *advocaat-fiscaal* (public prosecutor in financial cases) of the States of Holland. He enjoyed the patronage of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the leading man in the States of Holland. At the same he also served as a learned counsellor, and sometimes spokesman, for the interests of the States of Holland.

In 1601 he became the States of Holland's historiographer, as successor to Janus Dousa; after Dousa's death in 1604 this appointment was formalised. In this capacity Grotius produced two histories of the revolt from which the new commonwealth arose and which will occupy us below. He also prepared a defence of the capture of a valuable Portuguese vessel in the Strait of Malacca in 1603 by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). In 1613 Grotius became pensionary (political counsellor) of the city of Rotterdam and in that capacity, a member of the States of Holland. In the mounting politico-religious tensions of the Truce period he first tried to maintain a neutral stance but later aligned himself firmly with the 'Staatsgezinde' and 'Remonstrant' side in the conflict. After the defeat of this party in 1618, Grotius was tried and imprisoned for life. He escaped from prison in 1621 (the famous escape in the book chest) and went to Paris where he lived as an independent scholar and published his soon world-famous *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*, 'On the Law of War and Peace'. In 1631 he made an attempt to return to Holland, but had to flee once again. He was now employed by the Swedish crown as their representative to the French crown (from 1634). This mission was not a great success, and Grotius was revoked in 1644. On the way back from Sweden his ship was caught in a storm, and Grotius died in Rostock on 28 August 1645.<sup>3</sup>

### *De Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavae* (1610)

At the time the 'Twelve Years' Truce was concluded in 1609 the *Annales et Historiae*, on which Grotius had been working since 1601, were growing steadily but were far from finished. Moreover, there seems to have been a political agenda behind them that did not suit the celebration of the *de facto* recognition of the United Provinces as an independent state that marked this moment. In any case, for whatever reason, on this occasion Grotius published another, much shorter account of the Dutch revolt and its backgrounds under the title *De Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavae* (1610, 'The Antiquity of the Batavian Republic').<sup>4</sup> The work is primarily a defence of the sovereignty<sup>5</sup> of the States of the province of 'Holland and West-Friesland' (the area covered by the present-day provinces of North Holland and South

Holland, here to be called Holland). The intended import of this argument is in fact threefold: first, that the Revolt was legitimate because Philip had violated the constitution (the privileges) and the sovereignty of the States; second, that present-day Holland (and the other provinces) are legitimate states since their present form of government is a restoration of the form of government that they had enjoyed ever since Roman times; and third, that supreme power in the United Provinces resides with the *provincial* level.

To support this position, Grotius presents and interprets a collection of historical and legal evidence showing that the Low Countries' mixed constitution, which divided power over many institutions instead of concentrating it in the hands of one, had in fact existed since Batavian (Roman) times and had in unbroken succession survived until the Habsburg rulers violated the rules, partly written, partly unwritten, on which it was founded. In addition he identified ancient Batavia with the modern-day province of Holland and presented the ancient Batavians as the embodiment of the virtue, courage, loyalty and simplicity that he claimed for his compatriots (and set as *exemplum* for them to follow). This defence of the provincial sovereignty of Holland is in fact a restatement of the arguments produced by the States' spokesman François Vranck in 1587 to defend Holland's provincial sovereignty against the claims to central power made by the earl of Leicester, the commander of the military assistance sent to the Dutch by Elizabeth I of England.<sup>6</sup>

For our purpose, *De Antiquitate* contains important information. First, who are the 'we' in the text? A straightforward answer to this question is possible: the people of the province of Holland. The work defines the province as the unit endowed with sovereign power. Other provinces in the Low Countries, such as Friesland, Brabant, Flanders are (or were) neighbouring nations of equal standing. For the Batavians or Hollanders as a people Grotius uses both *gens* and *natio*, and these words refer to units the size of a province. Friesland, Brabant, etc. are neighbouring *gentes* or *nationes* of Holland.

Their non-autocratic form of government is presented as a crucial characteristic of the peoples in former Lower Germany. This form of government is a 'mixed constitution' in which there is day-to-day government by a prince assisted by a small council of advisers; major decisions are voted on in a large council of delegates from the entire population. This large council, which meets only occasionally, has the power to appoint or depose the prince, which means that ultimately they 'own' the sovereignty. This council is equivalent to the assembly later called the States; the small council could be identified with the later Council of State (but this point is not made so

explicit).<sup>7</sup> We need to note that this constitution contains an important monarchical element (the prince or commander), but that this element is not sovereign. In practice, supreme power is shared between prince and States in mutual respect, but when they clash, the States are the senior party. For Grotius this arrangement is an unalienable characteristic of all the *gentes* in the Low Countries.

In a few places in the text the word Batavians is also applied in a wider sense to the United Provinces as a whole, which indicates that in this text it is possible for Grotius to think of the 'Dutch Republic' as a *gens*, but these are exceptional cases. It should also be noted that in spite of valid historical claims from historians in Gelre (modern Gelderland), Grotius has appropriated the Batavian identity for the province of Holland. In *De Antiquitate* the discussion (which had been the object of debate earlier in the sixteenth century) over whether Gelre or Holland was the location of ancient Batavia is passed over in silence.

In 1630 a new edition of *De Antiquitate* appeared, which was extended with antiquarian notes by Petrus Scriverius that serve to corroborate Grotius's argument with detailed scholarly evidence and even some archaeological data. Although this is not the place for a full discussion of these notes, one anomaly from them might serve to illustrate the difference between Scriverius's perception of the area important for 'Batavia' and the territory of the modern Dutch nation-state. In his description of Lower Germany on the so-called *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a late ancient Roman road map, Scriverius enumerates the ancient place names on two roads through Batavian territory towards the North Sea coast. The locations on the northern road in Holland, Utrecht and Gelderland, from Nijmegen (Noviomagus) to the west are all duly summed up, although Scriverius could not identify all of them. In the enumeration of places on the southern road however, Scriverius erroneously replaces all locations between Aachen and Nijmegen with the places east of Nijmegen on the *northern* road. He thus omits, among others, Coriovallum (Heerlen), Blariacum (Blerick) and Ceuclum (Cuijk) or, in other words, roughly the area covered by the modern province of Limburg. Although for him this area must have been far outside ancient Batavia, and by 1630 most of it was controlled by Habsburg or its Catholic allies, it was not outside Belgica and would have been no less relevant to mention than the places east of Nijmegen on the northern road (between Nijmegen and Xanten) that were also outside the area controlled by the United Provinces. The fact that he overlooked this error even in the printing proofs of the book seems an indication that this area was less relevant to his view of 'his' country. However, in the

description of the siege of Maastricht in the *Annales*<sup>8</sup> by Grotius himself there is nothing in the text to suggest that the author thinks of the area as being outside the Low Countries.<sup>9</sup>

### *Annales et Historiae de rebus Belgicis (1601-12)*

The *Annales* are the first part of Grotius's *Annales et Historiae*. They recount the Dutch Revolt from 1566 to early 1588 (21 years) and consist of five books totalling 114 pages in length. The *Historiae* cover the next 21 years from 1588 to 1609 in 18 books of 453 pages. These describe the rise of the Republic from 1588 onwards under the joint leadership of Prince Maurice and the chief politician of the province of Holland, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. The *Annales* are supposed to function as introduction to the *Historiae*; Grotius writes that, since they are further removed in time, and the chief 'characters' in the narrative are no longer active, his freedom to write was greater in the *Annales* than in the *Historiae*.<sup>10</sup> Because of this and because of their more limited length, the *Annales* are the more attractive source for our purposes. The *Annales et Historiae* were written at the request of the States of Holland, and over the years Grotius received in total the considerable sum of 1800 guilders for this work.<sup>11</sup> The choice of Latin suggests that a foreign audience was addressed, in addition to a domestic one.<sup>12</sup>

The *Annales et Historiae* are written in close imitation of Tacitus's literary style and sceptical political outlook; the titles *Annales* and *Historiae* are a very explicit indication of the use of this model. The imitation of Tacitus points to a desire to follow international literary fashion and to give the contemporary history of the Low Countries the status and weight of world history, just as Tacitus's account had made the Julio-Claudian period one of the key eras in world history. Finally, the imitation of Tacitus should give Grotius's work the qualities of perceptiveness and sceptical realism that belong to the contemporary literature on Reason of State, of which 'Tacitism' was an important branch. This position usually implies a critical view of religion (of whichever denomination), its role in society, and the claims that religious and ecclesiastical institutions made on the agendas of secular rulers. The 'Tacitists' were among the first to call for the submission of religion to politics (the forerunner in many ways of the modern separation of state and church) and Grotius is no exception.

In 1612, Grotius submitted the *Annales et Historiae* to the States. However, after review by a committee of two advisers, the States decided not to publish the book. Unfortunately, neither a report on the *Annales et Historiae* by this



committee nor minutes of meetings in which the matter was discussed are known. Thus we do not know the exact reasons for not publishing the *Annales et Historiae*. Grotius subsequently undertook a revision of the text, which he finished only in 1637. Due to difficulties with the publisher, the work appeared only long after Grotius's death, in 1657. It is a stout volume of almost 600 pages. By that time, however, it was no longer really a work of contemporary history, and the *Annales et Historiae* had to compete with Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft's similarly grand and Tacitist history of the early Revolt, which, however, was written in Dutch and thus more easily accessible. In spite of a Dutch translation in 1681 and English and French translations from the 1660s, the *Annales et Historiae* relatively soon became more or less forgotten.

In the *Annales* the 'we' behind the text is different from that in *De Antiquitate*. The *Annales* are primarily concerned with Belgica or the Low Countries as a whole, that is, all seventeen provinces of the *Bourgondische Kreits*<sup>13</sup> together. In the comparison with *De Antiquitate*, this creates a linguistic distinction between Belgica and Batavia, the 'Low Countries' and 'the Dutch Republic' respectively, which conforms to the more general understanding and usage in Grotius's time. However, the words *gens* and *natio* are mostly used, as in *De Antiquitate*, to refer to the inhabitants of a province, although the cases that speak of a *gens Belgica* are less rare than in *De Antiquitate*. A relatively clear and consistent distinction between the use of *gens* and that of *natio* can be discerned: *gens* refers to the people of the province in a more informal sense, while *natio* generally refers to a province as a formal, legal entity (e.g. the body politic represented by its States). This use of the word *natio* shows quite clearly that for Grotius the idea of 'logical' unity of a people, a specific geographical territory, and a political organisation exists; and that this unity is the province.

With respect to culture, identity and character, however, the introductory chapter contains an extensive discussion of the character of the people in the Low Countries as a whole:

The conjunction with Spain brought a huge growth. But already at that time men with better insight predicted, with a certain amount of fear (since the rulers' resources had grown enormously), a change in the political conditions. This they based on the customs of the Spanish, which they had studied during their service with them in wars, and on their differences with themselves. For as long as they were joined as neighbouring peoples by equivalent origins and identical wishes, they interacted easily and in fraternal relationships. Between Spaniards and the Netherlanders, however, most things are different, and they collide the more sharply in



those matters that they have in common. Both peoples had in all ages been distinguished for martial valour; except that the latter had lost the habit of it, while the former were kept vigorous by continuous discipline and rewards through campaigns in Italy and across the Ocean. But the Dutch, frugal indeed and willing to suffer hard labour in their zeal for profit, with this in view seek peace and trade, but not so as to put up with injury. No people is more abstinent with respect to others' possessions; their own they defend stoutly. For this reason, in their little corner of the world there are cities exceedingly numerous and strengthened, originally near the sea and the rivers; later everywhere, strengthened by a multitude of newcomers and progeny. And thus, after the furies from Scandinavia had been driven off, they survived for eight centuries unconquered by foreign arms and unplundered.

[...]

Possession of Spain, after under various conquerors it had drawn much from their customs, at length returned to the Goths. Old and new writers describe those to us as of undaunted spirit in the face of trials and dangers, ever since they mixed their character of origin with that of their dwellings; eager – uncertain whether more for glory than for wealth, so arrogant as to be contemptuous of others, respectful, however, of things sacred and fairly loyal in return for benefits, but so passionate for revenge and wild in victory that against an enemy nothing is shameful, nothing forbidden. With the Lowlanders, this is all just the other way round: they are a people of innocent craftiness and furthermore in customs, as in position, a blend of Germany and France: not free of the faults of both, not without their virtues. You will neither easily fool, nor rashly insult them. That they have never been second to the Spanish in religious devotion is shown by the fact that ever since the time they took up Christianity, they have collectively resisted the pressure of Norman violence to change their creed. Not infected by any condemned error until our times, they attached so much value to their faith that it was necessary to prescribe a limit to the possessions of ministers of the gospel. Generally, for both peoples honouring and admiring princes was innate. But the Dutch think laws superior, under which pretext there was often disorder. The people of Castile love to be ruled even a bit more strictly than the other peoples of Spain, and yet the liberty that they demand for themselves, however great or small it be, they do not tolerate in others. Hence a very great danger, with the attention of princes divided as if over two realms: the

Dutch were not able to tolerate anyone superior in influence, nor the Spaniards any equal.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, according to Grotius the people of the Low Countries are unwarlike, focused on trade and commerce, marked by an 'innocent craftiness', abstinent of other people's possessions, but intolerant of injury. There is a high degree of urbanisation; they have a weak internal organisation, and there is little coherence and solidarity between cities and provinces. They attach great importance to religion, liberty and constitutional government (as opposed to autocratic).<sup>15</sup>

This passage leaves no doubt that there is a common Low Countries' 'culture' (mentality, identity) shared by all the provinces. However, it subsequently appears that the Walloon provinces are not an entirely integrated part of this cultural realm: apart from a different language (French), they are credited with a very warlike spirit, unlike the other *gentes*:

soldiers from the Walloons this time; which name applies to a number of regions in the Low Countries that share a border with France and are distinct from the rest by their use of the French language and a more warlike character.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Luxemburg places itself outside the group by its unwavering loyalty to the crown:

Luxemburg, where private interests made the governors dependent on the Spanish crown and the population is traditionally uncompromising in its loyalty to its princes.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Dutch language is not separately discussed in this passage or elsewhere in the *Annales*, it is attractive to conclude that for Grotius the common character described in the fragment above applies first and foremost to the Dutch-speaking provinces. He adds that, for some, the Low Countries are a subdivision of Germany, for others, a potential part of France.<sup>18</sup>

An interesting passage is that in which Grotius expresses his regret and indignation at the separation between North and South. According to him, the Pacification of Ghent in 1576 was

in this entire history, the only time that one could hope for a happy outcome, if at least together with the weaponry, the internal hatred would

be put down. However, when I look at it more closely, I see as the surest root of evil the competing ambitions of the nobility, and a vice in the population which resembles it, the impatient love of their own religion, which will never acquiesce in agreements or the present situation. As long as these exist, there will always be party strife and instruments to use against liberty.<sup>19</sup>

The implied 'unhappy outcome' then must be the separation of North and South.

For our purpose, however, it makes sense to contrast this with the observation that in the *Annales* most of Grotius's attention and concern are with the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Flanders and Brabant. The North and East receive noticeably less attention; and we have already seen that in Grotius's perception the Walloon provinces and Luxemburg are different groups too. Therefore, although Grotius's regret at the separation of North and South leaves no doubt that the cultural unity of the Low Countries was a thing that mattered to him, there are grounds to think that he perceived Holland, Zeeland, Flanders and Brabant as a distinguishable subgroup within the whole of the Low Countries, and, indeed, as their centre of gravity.

We have seen above that the provinces were very anxious to preserve their own sovereignty, which they regarded as the basis and guarantee of their freedom. The downside of this tendency was a dangerous lack of coherence and solidarity among the rebellious provinces, towns and nobility and to a considerable degree among the 'United Provinces'. This internal disunity and lack of solidarity appear to have been among the stereotypical characteristics of the Low Countries at the time, both in their own eyes and those of some foreigners. The South-Netherlandish scholar Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) refers to this disunity in his infamous advice to the Habsburg government to conclude a peace or truce; in a 1595 letter to Francisco de San Vítores de la Portilla, Lipsius points out that the internal division among the northern provinces is so great that once their external enemy is removed internal conflict will break out and a reconquest of the North will be easily possible.<sup>20</sup> This 'lesson by Lipsius' is still referred to in 1648-49 in the diaries of the Frisian stadholder William Frederick.<sup>21</sup> Grotius alludes to this tendency with frightening frequency in the *Annales* and sometimes connects it with the nature of Calvinism, which he depicts as stubborn and intolerant of different persuasions. Grotius is out to define the political community (*natio* as defined above) as decidedly secular in nature. Holland and the Dutch Republic are not religious communities (although they can have religious identities as attributes).

Finally, it is important to note that in the *Annales* the antithesis against which the Dutch character and identity are defined, are two other peoples: not just the Spaniards, but the English as well. In the first book, the Dutch character is defined in contrast to the Spanish character, in book 5 to the English character. Regarding that comparison, Grotius says:

Like a governor in the province assigned to him, Leicester entered into secret deliberations, especially with other Englishmen as to how he could extend his power. However, the nature and culture of the English and the Dutch are quite different: just as willingly as the English [*Angli*] resign themselves to servitude, so vehemently do they compensate this humility by brutality once they have reached a high position. Lowlanders [*Belgae*] command and obey moderately, and no nation [*gens*] is more strongly attached to its leaders or turns against them with greater anger if the respect gets lost.<sup>22</sup>

The inclusion of this comparison reflects the tensions of the Leicester period (1585–88) that also produced the arguments in favour of provincial sovereignty that are restated in *De Antiquitate*. It follows from this that the culture and identity as well as the political independence of the Dutch Republic are defined, at least by Grotius, in antithesis to both Spanish and English identity.

### Barclay's *Icon Animorum* (1614)

In the once very popular book *Icon Animorum* (1614), the Scotsman John Barclay (1582–1621) describes the character and behaviour of his European contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> For a study of the history of nationhood and nationality, the *Icon* might be found a confusing text. On the one hand, the two introductory 'theoretical' chapters bring up the idea of a national character only at the very end and as a subdivision of the characters belonging to the subsequent *ages* of mankind, which might strengthen the idea that I noted at the beginning of this article that nationhood is not a very important category in seventeenth-century thought. Next however there follow seven chapters (out of a total of sixteen<sup>24</sup>) which describe the national 'spirits' of France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Eastern Europe, and the Turks and Jews.

As part of his chapter 5 on Germany, Barclay discusses the Low Countries (§22–28). He distinguishes the Republic from the loyal South, but says

that the people retain the same genius and dispositions (5.23); while in 5.26, however, we hear that the nobility of the South have adopted many Spanish character traits. Barclay mentions the Lowlanders' intolerance of autocracy and their rebellion, and the effect this had on their energy and valour in foreign trade. Next he devotes an entire paragraph to their drinking habits including (again) the information that drink is given to babies,<sup>25</sup> their industrious nature, their excellence in learning, the difference between the 'republican' and courtly political cultures of the North and South, respectively, the tendency of the population to attach greater importance to the show of liberty than liberty itself, the region's high degree of urbanisation, and the popularity of William of Orange.

## Conclusion

With respect to the question whether nineteenth- and twentieth-century ideas of nationhood can be traced to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ones, we can conclude that in Grotius's mind, the logical unity of a people, a specified territory, and a political organisation existed, and did so at the level of the province (e.g. Holland, Brabant; not a unit the size of a nineteenth-century nation-state), and that moreover this entity is the bearer of sovereignty. The Latin words for a people are *natio* when used in the formal 'constitutional' sense and *gens* when used in a wider sense. These words apply to the provincial unit in most cases, although *gens Belgica* is found for the inhabitants of Low Countries as a whole. *Belgicus* and *Belga* are the regular words for 'Lowlander' and 'Low Countries'; *Batavus* and *Batavia* for Hollander and Holland (which is also sometimes found in the wider sense of the 'Dutch Republic').

Accordingly, the more formally constitutional argument in *De Antiquitate* focuses on the province of Holland and the legitimacy of its sovereignty. The *Annales*, on the other hand, do not display this exclusive focus on Holland. Grotius describes a shared Low Countries history and character or culture that apply to all seventeen provinces (with the possible exception of the Walloons and the Luxemburgers, who are described as partly different in character); which means that the above provincial unit of people, territory and government does not also 'own' its cultural identity, but is part of a much larger cultural and linguistic space. On a more speculative note, however, it seems possible to distinguish another subgroup in his perception (apart from the Francophone South) consisting of Holland, Zeeland, Flanders and Brabant, which attract most of his interest and concern. This

would automatically create a third subgroup of the North and East, probably including the former bishopric of Utrecht. Thus the geographical make-up of the Low Countries in Grotius's mind does not even remotely resemble that of the modern nation-states of the Netherlands and Belgium.

The comparison with John Barclay's discussion of the Low Countries' character shows, first, that national character is defined only as a subcategory to the chronological ages of mankind, but is nevertheless important, given the space devoted to it in the book. With respect to the Low Countries' character and the then-current stereotypes of it, the foreigner Barclay's description in many ways confirms that by Grotius (e.g. dismissal of autocracy, drinking, urbanisation, trade and industry) and indeed applies this character to the Low Countries as a whole, not to individual provinces. He distinguishes only between the political cultures of North and South. Thus, in the eyes of observers both at home and abroad, the Low Countries were a recognisable whole at the level of their cultural identity. At the constitutional level and that of practical politics, the Hollander Grotius perceived them as a collection of separate entities, which could cooperate but often failed to do so, and within which subgroups might be discerned without any resemblance to the map of the present-day nation-states. While the roots of the idea of a national identity may be found in early modern historiographical texts like those of Grotius and Barclay, the concept went through a profound transformation in the second half of the eighteenth century.

## Notes

1. G.H. Janssen, *Nieuw Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers/Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 5-6.
2. For the history and political thought of the period, see e.g. J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic, Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. 129-398; M. van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); the modern edition of the Deposition of 1581: *Plakkaat van verlatinge*, ed. M.E.H.N. Mout (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2006); or the introductions to the texts by Grotius and Lipsius referred to elsewhere in this chapter.
3. Grotius's recent and most complete biography is H. Nellen, *Hugo de Groot. Een leven in strijd om de vrede 1583-1645* (Amsterdam: Balans 2007); translated into English as: Nellen, *Hugo Grotius. A Lifelong Struggle for Peace in Church and State, 1583-1645*, trans. J.C. Grayson (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014).

4. Hugo Grotius, *The Antiquity of the Batavian Republic. With the notes by Petrus Scriverius*, ed. and trans. Jan Waszink et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000, Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae). A Dutch translation was also published in 1610 that seems not to have been made by Grotius, but possibly by his father, Jan de Groot; *Tractaet vande ovdtheyt vande Batavische nv Hollandsche republique* (The Hague: H. Iacobsz, 1610) (Knuttel 1735, Tiele 864). See also Grotius, *Antiquity*, 31-2.
5. The term sovereignty used in the sense of 'supreme power', *not* in the sense of Jean Bodin's concept of sovereignty, which has no place in the political vocabulary of the Low Countries at this time, as the States themselves argued against Anjou and Bodin during the negotiations over Anjou's accession as prince of the rebellious provinces; see E.H. Kossmann, 'Volkssoevereiniteit aan het begin van het Nederlandse ancien régime', in E.H. Kossmann, *Politieke theorie en geschiedenis. Verspreide opstellen en voordrachten* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1987), 59-92.
6. For this discussion, see Grotius, *Antiquity*, Intr., 4 and literature references there.
7. Grotius, *Antiquity*, § 2.11-14, pp. 63-6.
8. *De Groot, Kroniek*, § 3.24, p. 118, and § 3.33, p. 124.
9. Grotius, *Antiquity*, 130-3; P. Stuart, *De Tabula Peutingeriana* (Nijmegen: Museum Kam, 1991), 2 vols.
10. Hugo Grotius, *Briefwisseling* vol. 1, ed. P.C. Molhuysen (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1928), 49. See also J. Waszink, 'Hugo Grotius' *Annales et Historiae de rebus Belgicis* from the evidence in his correspondence, 1604-1644', *LIAS* 31 (2004), 251.
11. *Resolutiën Staten van Holland* 1612, 242, and Nellen, *Hugo Grotius*, 177.
12. *Hugonis Grotii Annales et historiae de rebus Belgicis* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1657 and 1658). There is no modern edition, but the 1658 quarto edition is not rare and is available in many libraries. An inaccurate English translation by 'T.M.' was published in London in 1665: *Hugo Grotius, De Rebus Belgicis: or, The Annals, and history of the Low-Country-Wars*. Other translations were made into French (1662) and Dutch (1681). The author of this article published a new Dutch translation of the *Annales*: Hugo de Groot, *Kroniek van de Nederlandse Oorlog. De Opstand 1559-1588* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014) and is working on a new edition with an English translation of the *Annales*, to be published in the series *Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae*. For references to further scholarship, see the 2014 translation.
13. Consisting since 1548 of (in simplified enumeration): the counties of Artois, Flanders, Namur, Hainaut, Zeeland, and Holland; the dukedoms of Brabant, Gelre, Limburg, Luxemburg; the seignories of Mechelen, Utrecht, Overijssel, Friesland and Groningen; the areas of Lille and Doornik.
14. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1658, 4-5. All translations by the author, with thanks to Cynthia Damon, University of Pennsylvania. Dutch translation: see De Groot, *Kroniek*, § 1.10-11, pp. 16-7.

15. It is interesting to compare the image of the Lowlanders contained in the Spanish literature of the period, as discussed by e.g. Y. Rodríguez Pérez, *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog in Spaanse ogen* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2003). Here the *Flamencos* (=Belgae) are presented as simple-minded and credulous, fickle or precisely stubborn; prone to feasting and drinking. For a rather nuanced Spanish description of the Low Countries' character, see the army captain Alonso Vásquez in Brouwer, *Kronieken van Spaanse soldaten uit het begin van den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1933) 85-126. Vásquez also mentions the stereotypes of the Lowlanders as tradespeople (89) credulous and superstitious (90, 122-3), prone to drinking (89, 92; even giving drink to babies), and ungrateful (91). He discusses their simplicity (106), the independence and equality of women (92-93), and their eagerness for learning (92, 111), which he connects with both the Lowlanders' strong piety and their capacity for heresy; public chastity (114); good care for the poor (117); and constitutional government and loathing of kings (103, 125-6). According to Vásquez, however, the war has turned them into valiant soldiers.
16. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae*, 24 (*Kroniek*, § 1.61, p. 51 see also § 3.27, p. 121).
17. *Ibid.*, 48 (*Kroniek*, § 2.65, p. 98).
18. Germany: e.g. ed. 1658- 4°, 4, 11, 21, 31; De Groot, *Kroniek*, § 1.11, 1.28, 1.55, 2.15 (pp. 16, 27, 45, 61). France: e.g. 1658, 4, 34, *Kroniek*, § 1.11, 2.24 (pp. 16, 67).
19. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae* 49 (*Kroniek*, § 3.66, p. 99).
20. *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae* vol. 8, ed. J. Delandtsheer, ep. 95 01 02S (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België: 2004). See also J. Lipsius, *Politica. Six books of Politics or Political Instruction*, ed. with translation and introduction by Jan Waszink (Assen: Van Gorcum 2004, Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae), 27.
21. William Frederik, *Gloria Parendi*, ed. J. Visser and G. van der Plaat (The Hague: Nederlands Historisch Genootschap, 1995); Rodríguez Pérez, *Tachtigjarige oorlog*, 79.
22. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae* 95 (*Kroniek*, § 5.13, p. 181).
23. John Barclay, *Icon Animorum or The Mirror of Minds*, ed. Mark Riley, trans. Thomas May (Leuven: Leuven UP, 2013, Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae).
24. Covering 127 of 270 pages in the modern edition, or roughly half of the book.
25. Cf. the characteristics mentioned by Vásquez, note 15 above.





## 7 A Russia Born of War

*Gregory Carleton*

As Romantic nationalism swept across Europe during the early nineteenth century, in Russia that sentiment exploded after Napoleon's invasion of 1812. While war can galvanize the national spirit of any people, to many Russians this was a conflict of a different order, as if Destiny itself had singled them out for a special test. One of history's greatest generals, an army numbering nearly 600,000, and a victory that would ensure French supremacy on the continent – all combined to create a scenario never seen before. Whereas Napoleon could marshal the resources of all his satellites and conquered territories, the Russians stood alone against this titan.

They passed that test with flying colours and in so doing changed the world. No other country had, by itself, repelled an attack by Napoleon and no one else had utterly crushed his army, once seen as invincible. The next year Russia crossed its border, uniting with Austria and Prussia in a crusade to liberate the continent that ended in Paris in 1814. Though Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo would come a year later, for Russians that was but the final act of his denouement. They had inflicted the mortal wound on their soil. If this was the age when other Europeans searched for national greatness, Russians need look no further. Theirs lay in a singular feat of arms, as given in the poignant summary by Denis Davydov, a flamboyant partisan leader: 'now my head rises with pride, knowing that I am Russian'.<sup>1</sup>

The enduring engine of that spirit comes from Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Whether as a novel, as a philosophical tract or as a historical study – he intertwined all three – ever since its publication in the 1860s, it has become Russians' primary source to remember, to relive and to understand the significance of 1812. Nothing the poet writes can rival it as epic; nothing the scholar produces can displace its scenes and characters as icons of that feat. In fact, its grip on the Russian collective imagination has been so strong that the novel transcends itself as fiction. Tolstoy's contemporary and fellow novelist, Ivan Turgenev, wrote that out of more than 'hundreds of essays on ethnography or history', this work was the 'faithful representation of the character and temperament of the Russian people'. It served, in his words, as a living document of what constituted 'true Russia'.<sup>2</sup> And so the novel lives on, leaving it difficult not to agree with the conclusion of Konstantin Simonov, a writer from the Second World War: 'it is unthinkable, indeed impossible to imagine Russia without Tolstoy'.<sup>3</sup>

Tolstoy's impact – which has not diminished to this day – stems both from his creative genius and also from the story he crafts of the invasion. If, as a novel, *War and Peace* has many protagonists, then as a history of Russian resistance and ultimate triumph, it has only one hero: the Russian people. Never before had 1812 come alive as the saga of peasants and townspeople – individualised and sometimes identified by name – rising up against the French, sacrificing themselves, their villages and their land to stop and then drive the enemy out. Earlier accounts, be it in history, fiction, verse or song, had celebrated Tsar Alexander I, first and foremost, as the architect of victory. Tolstoy daringly flipped this hierarchy. For him it is the collective power of the people, an elemental force fuelled equally by hatred of the French and passion for their country that, in the narrator's words, surges forth with one goal: 'to free their own land from invasion'.<sup>4</sup>

Tolstoy enshrines the 1812 campaign as 'the people's war'. He did not coin the term, but his novel is its unparalleled testament. Much of this is due to the fact that he avoids the monochromatic panegyrics that dominated Russian letters produced in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. To press this point even further, from his pen not all of 'the people' follow the heroic script. There are cowards, shirkers and sell-outs to the French. Moreover, Tolstoy underscores the suffering at their level – the human costs of leaders' follies, the execution of civilians, the burning of Moscow, and the harsh toll taken by deprivation – that serve to de-romanticise the war. Taken together, these realistic inclusions do not dethrone the sense of triumph; rather, they turn 'the people's war' into a majestic ordeal – made all the more compelling by the novel's ground-breaking unconventionality.

If Tolstoy turned the invasion into a national epic, what made 1812 even more special for nineteenth-century nationalist sentiments was the recognition that precisely two hundred years before something similar, indeed even worse, had befallen their country: beset by foreign invaders, the Kremlin occupied, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church a prisoner, the tsar dethroned. Russia, nevertheless, survived, and the story of how it did provided nineteenth-century writers, artists and intellectuals yet even more historical material with which to wax poetic about their country. As a result, scholarly attention logically tends to highlight these later commemorations of and claims on the seventeenth-century past.<sup>5</sup> In what follows, however, I would like to turn that search inside out, focusing on the narrative strategies employed by contemporaries then – particularly one writer, Avraamy Palitsyn, who helped give that story shape – in order to probe a key question: might their approach, as applied to a similar military situation, contain seeds of what would blossom after 1812?

## National Survival

The dire condition in which Russia found itself at the beginning of the seventeenth century is commonly known as the Time of Troubles. Devastating famines ripped through the population, claiming, by modern estimates, nearly a third of them. Social upheaval followed as desperate survivors abandoned their homes and villages, while marauders and bandits descended, turning the countryside into anarchy. Politically, the situation was no better. At the very same time, and partly because of this social implosion, central authority collapsed into a chaotic melee among dynastic rivals, false claimants and usurpers – all seeking to gain the throne.

Foreign neighbours feasted on this vacuum of power. From the south came the Crimean Tatars who burnt the suburbs of Moscow; from the north, the Swedes entered, initially as allies, but quickly began to seize Russian territories around the Baltic; and from the west the Poles, united with Lithuanians, invaded. It was this last group which almost dealt Russia a mortal blow, thanks in part to the machinations of some of its most prestigious nobles. In 1610, after having deposed Tsar Vasily Shuisky (whose royal blood ran somewhat thin and was himself a usurper), they did the unthinkable: agreeing that rule should pass to the Polish royal line, they opened the Kremlin gates to its troops.

The looming crisis was not just political but profoundly religious as well stemming from the unique position in which Russian Orthodoxy saw itself. More than a century before, two events combined to create a watershed moment for Russian identity by putting its faith in an exclusive light. The first was the fall of Constantinople, capital of the Orthodox Christian world, to Ottoman Turks in 1453, and the second, coming a few decades after, was Russia's own deliverance from its Mongol overlords, who had exercised control over the land for over two hundred years. In one stroke, or so it would seem to the ruling elite, God had made the momentous choice to elevate Russia as the supreme protector of the true faith. All other Orthodox Christians – Serbians, Greeks, Bulgarians and so forth – were now ruled by infidels or Catholic heretics save for this one with Moscow as its capital.

The ideology that resulted is most famously known as the 'Third Rome', following the logic that if the first, the Vatican, was controlled by Catholics and now the second, Constantinople, by Muslims, then Moscow was the new capital of Christendom itself. Other iterations of exceptionalism were that of the city as the 'New Jerusalem' or Russia as the 'New Israel' but under any name it bestowed on the Russian state a special mission: it was the last bastion of the true faith since only its lands were free from spiritual

contamination. As a result, the political imperative of defending the land fused with a religious one, meaning that any contest with its neighbours – Muslim Tatars to the south, Catholic Poles to the west, and Protestant Swedes to the north – could be taken as a truly cosmic one.

At the beginning of the Time of Troubles, therefore, each usurper or claimant to the Russian throne marched under the pretension of God's unique blessing and routinely castigated his opponents as apostates of the Orthodox faith. Later, however, when none such rivals remained and the Poles occupied the Kremlin, the context and stakes of the conflict changed dramatically. The plans of the Polish king, Sigismund III, called for nothing less than the forcible conversion of his (future) Orthodox subjects to Catholicism. What was before a dynastic contest for the Russian throne was now, if the Poles succeeded, an existential one – in other words, a war for the very survival of the Orthodox faith.

That, at least, was the alarm raised by the head of the Russian church, Patriarch Hermogen, a prisoner of the Poles in the Kremlin. Sending out secret letters from his cell, he urged Russians to stop killing themselves, unite around their faith and drive out the foreign heretics. Others followed suit, raising the same cry through broadsides and pamphlets that coursed from city to city, especially in the northeast of Russia which remained unoccupied. One such example, author unknown, gives us a striking portrait of the conceptual categories in play at this level and in real time.

As would be expected for the early modern period, peoples and actions are rendered in biblical terms. The author highlights the patriarch's role as a 'pillar amidst our great land', armed only with 'God's word' against the 'forces of Hagar' and excoriates any who support the Poles as 'Satan's relatives' and the 'brethren of Judas'.<sup>6</sup> The stakes are nothing less than apocalyptic since the enemy has come not just to kill and enslave but to 'eradicate' the Orthodox faith and replace it with their 'fallen one'. Moreover, if Orthodoxy serves as the ideological foundation to unite, in the author's words, 'all of us', so too does that very same land, identified here as 'Great Russia'.<sup>7</sup> The two, in fact, are inseparable since the loss of one, as is made clear, means the loss of the other. In short, the appeal is to a people whose collective identity shares a terrestrial and spiritual dimension to the exclusion of all others. Thus the 'time has come' to rise and fight, and the author ends with the exhortation to tell others and spread the word. What is more remarkable is that rhetoric such as this, echoing the patriarch and circulating in wide fashion, proved to have real power.

In 1612 a militia formed in the unoccupied territories with a single mission: to liberate Moscow from foreign heretics and elect one of their own as

tsar. That goal reaffirmed how religious and political imperatives merged while operating under a putative sense of self-awareness that was as much 'Russian' as it was 'Orthodox'. This does not mean that all who joined the militia did so for such purposes, but the fact that the militia fulfilled its mission in precisely this way suggests that the idea behind it had concrete legitimacy: the Poles were defeated, Moscow was freed, and instead of looting and rampaging – as was customary on such occasions – in just a few months an assembly elected a young noble, Michael Romanov, tsar in 1613. While fighting would continue, the Time of Troubles, as is conventionally seen, was over. The state, the Russian people, and their faith were saved.

Because virtually none of the primary documents from this period have been translated, this crucial episode of Russia's past remains relatively unknown in the West. Nevertheless, historians and literary scholars, who might disagree on other matters, concur for the most part that something akin to a national awakening occurred at this time. In the conclusion of Chester Dunning, for example, 'Russia's salvation came at the hands of the people themselves, adding to patriotic Russians' growing sense of personal responsibility to defend their homeland as the last refuge of true, untainted Christianity'.<sup>8</sup> On a similar note, Michael Cherniavsky has argued that only after the Time of Troubles did the epithet 'Holy Russia' appear as an expression found among the people, whereas before manifestations of exceptionalism, like the concept of Third Rome, were the provenance of the elite.<sup>9</sup>

## A Writer for the Time

A key voice from this conflict belongs to Avraamy Palitsyn, a high-ranking church official, participant in the 1612 militia, and author of an illuminating work that appeared around 1620, commonly titled *The Narrative of Avraamy Palitsyn*.<sup>10</sup> Comprised of seventy-seven chapters, the work divides itself into three parts. The first six chapters explain why disaster befell Russia from the very beginning (a combination of sins committed personally by Tsar Boris Godunov who died in 1605 and collectively by the people). The final twenty-two chapters focus on the conflict's victorious outcome and aftermath. In this third section, he describes Patriarch Hermogen's role in initiating the campaign of letters and, with obvious pride, delivers a roll call of the cities which in 1612 sent soldiers to Moscow so as to 'avenge Christian blood'. Here, writing in the third person, Palitsyn assigns himself a central role in the militia's success, particularly in his ability to rally

Cossacks to their cause. Without Palitsyn's personal intervention there and elsewhere, the final outcome, at least according to him, would have been quite different.

It is, however, the forty-five chapters in between these two sections that concern us here because they have been relatively neglected in discussions about the roots of Russian nationalism. If the first and the third sections operate as wide-ranging macro history, the centrepiece of Palitsyn's work is the opposite, focusing instead on just one part of the conflict: the siege of the St. Sergius-Holy Trinity Monastery. In fact, his account of the siege has its own separate introduction and conclusion from the main body, suggesting it was written as a self-standing narrative.<sup>11</sup> Thus scholars believe it was likely produced at a different time from the other two sections, which later were all merged or edited into a single text. This begs the question: why would Palitsyn give the siege such narrative weight, far exceeding anything else he wrote, and what might be the importance of his departure from the norm?

While the Time of Troubles was witness to many sieges, there was none more consequential in a symbolic and, literally speaking, spiritual sense for the Orthodox faithful. In terms of religious prestige and authority, the Holy Trinity Monastery was unrivalled since its founding in the fourteenth century by Sergius of Radonezh who was destined to become one of Russia's most legendary saints. As a model of asceticism, his lifelong devotion and piety inspired nothing less than the reformation of Russia's monastic system, and his monastery became one of the richest, most powerful and largest in terms of land ownership. Such was its influence, which carried on this legacy in Sergius's name, that the Holy Trinity Monastery has served ever since as the spiritual home of Russian Orthodoxy.

In 1608, therefore, when a large Polish-Lithuanian force that included Tatars, some Russians and others surrounded it, a better setting could not have been scripted for what many truly believed was a cosmic showdown. For eighteen months, the monastery's garrison endured repeated assaults, hunger, deprivation and disease. Yet despite numerous offers to surrender, it never did, and the enemy eventually withdrew. This victory helped secure the final one, the liberation of Moscow, since the monastery was strategically located seventy kilometres northeast of the capital city and would later serve as an important conduit for and contributor to the patriotic letter-writing campaign.

The Holy Trinity Monastery was also the one to which Palitsyn belonged, though he was not there during the siege. His assignment was in Moscow. Afterwards, however, he spoke with surviving defenders, some of whom he knew personally, and read relevant records. It would be premature to suggest

that this approach gives his account something of a proto-journalistic basis, but the narrative flavour it adds does make his account almost unique for his time.

At first such a distinction might not be apparent. As with virtually all chronicles from this period, no matter where allegiances might lie, his script operates in conventional binary categories. Inside the monastery's thick walls stand 'Christ's flock of Orthodox Christians', 'Christ-loving warriors,' and the 'lambs.' Arrayed outside are 'Satan's hordes', the 'children of heresy' or simply the 'wolves'. Russians who joined the attacking side (and some did for purely mercenary reasons) are described as having 'forgotten God', as 'vile apostates' or, more poignantly, as 'Russian traitors'. The narrative's religiously-based superstructure also motivates actions that occur on a cosmic/supernatural plane. St. Sergius himself, for instance, descends from heaven to help in his monastery's defence by warning of night attacks or causing enemy arrows to boomerang back and kill them. Another refrain describes the defenders as part of the new Israel, and actions are sometimes overlaid with biblical prefigurations of the same. At this level, little departs from our expectations for early modern literature – so much so that a doyen of the field, Dmitri Chizhevski, waved off Palitsyn's siege narrative with the retort: 'He [Palitsyn] is unable to illustrate his description in an effective way for he substitutes for concrete representation the petrified formulas of the old military literature'.<sup>12</sup>

Yet if we accept that premise then we prematurely close our eyes to what, in fact, makes Palitsyn's account stand out, and, *pace* Chizhevski, why it decisively breaks from the past precisely in its representational strategy. In between 'petrified formulas' the narrative drives home a well-crafted sense of suspense, buttressed by an unprecedented emphasis on detail. Its short chapters, each typically featuring a dramatic episode, transport the reader (and, given literacy rates then, more often the listener) into an almost you-are-there event. We follow the action as enemy trenches snake their way towards the monastery walls while, below ground, unseen tunnels crawl closer and closer. The defenders race to find them before they undermine the walls and often send out night-time sorties to seize a 'tongue' – an enemy soldier – who is then tortured to disclose their location. Besieged Russians also scale down on ropes to surprise a foraging party that gets too close, or, with St. Sergius's forewarning, ambush a night-time assault party, dropping incendiary devices on it and setting many alight – all narrated with a deep sense of satisfaction.

An intense attention to the physical setting and other minutiae heightens this impression. The precise names of the fields, groves, streams, hills and



gullies where the fighting took place proliferate (e.g., ‘from the Moscow road and the dam on Red Pond up to Volkusha Hill’).<sup>13</sup> So too are the exact dates and even time of the day given. All of this is irrelevant to the actual fighting – all the more so for a reader who never had or would set foot on the monastery grounds – but not to the ‘reality effect’ Palitsyn seeks (he even identifies, at times, who provided him with what information). Underscoring this effect are both the inclusion of defeats and the candid admission that not all the defenders are worthy of the Christian honorific of being ‘lambs’. Some steal bread from the monastery stores to trade for drink with the predictable debauchery and mayhem to follow. Others shirk from duty or behave treacherously, either by deserting or signalling the enemy from the walls.

Quite often in these passages, the religious colouring fades, leaving an almost matter-of-fact account no matter the subject at hand, as in the following example:

On the nineteenth day of the same month [October] Lithuanians came to steal cabbage from the garden plot [located alongside the monastery]. From the fortress, seeing that there weren’t many of them, several [of ours], not because of any leader’s orders but by their own volition, descended down the fortress walls on ropes. They killed some of the Lithuanians and wounded others. At the same time a youth, the servant Oska Selevin, ran off to the Lithuanian forces.<sup>14</sup>

This approach is particularly telling when applied to the defenders’ sufferings. As enemy cannonballs rain down on them, the monk Kornely loses his ‘right leg up to the knee’, while ‘that same day’ a cannonball tears off an elderly woman’s ‘right arm and shoulder’, killing her.<sup>15</sup> As the toll mounts, a daily ritual forms of carrying the gravely wounded into a church dedicated to Mary, where they are given last rites and the men, at least, tonsured. The rising number of dead leads to inflation for the cost of burials, until corpses are just buried in groups. Hideous sanitary conditions combined with malnutrition bring on scurvy with people’s teeth falling out, whereas others are afflicted with horrible swellings and putrid scabs. Most devastating is the ‘non-stop diarrhea’ that immobilises sufferers and causes an ‘effusion of feces’, in which worms grow, spreading pestilence further.<sup>16</sup>

In both a quantitative and qualitative sense, Palitsyn presents such a rich vein of information that his work overshadows any previous Russian narrative of war, in particular its closest rival of a half century before, *The History of Kazan*. That lengthy text describes Tsar Ivan IV’s successful

siege in 1552 of Kazan, the capital of a Mongol successor state to the east of Moscow, which ultimately opened up the Volga region and Siberia to Russian conquest. The author, whose name is not known, revels in the same ideological and religious formulas as Palitsyn: Moscow is referenced as the Third Rome; the conflict against (the primarily) Muslim Kazan is rendered as a crusade of Christian good versus infidel evil; and the triumphant outcome is a clear sign of God's blessing over His chosen people. However, with the exception of certain details regarding the battle, such as Ivan's practice of surrounding the city with impaled prisoners – it is he who earned the sobriquet 'the Terrible' – the narrative lens is primarily formulaic or in the abstract. Never are we given the level of detail that lends Palitsyn's history such a measured degree of authenticity and nowhere does it match him in crafting an action-laden saga. Most importantly, for all its emphasis on Orthodox-defined Russian exceptionalism, nowhere in *The History of Kazan* do we get a sense of Russians as individuals, that is, as transcending the category of collective anonymity. Only those at the level of noble or commander are identified by name and action.

This last point is where Palitsyn's history of the siege of the Holy Trinity Monastery truly distinguishes itself. No one leader or hero dominates, as would be our expectation from earlier accounts of war. Instead, a multitude of individuals come to us on each page who often hail from the lower castes of Russian society like the peasantry and monastery workers and yet are identified by name – even if, as in the case of the youth described above, they are deserters. Thus we are introduced to Vlas Korsakov, who was given responsibility to listen for the sounds of tunnel digging 'since he was skilled at that', and just like the aforementioned Kornely, we learn of the monk Kopus Lodygin only because he was also killed by cannon shot. Another episode features a peasant nicknamed Sueta ('Restless') from the village of Molokovo rallying fellow Russians with his pole axe aloft. And yet in another, the peasants Shilov and Slota from the village of Klementevo set charges in an enemy tunnel and, before it reaches the monastery walls, blow it up with themselves inside.<sup>17</sup>

Palitsyn presents these individuals as if they are worthy of identification because they belong to a common cause, facing a common enemy, and sharing the same challenges. The result is a collective portrait of the monastery's defenders and their fate – the constant bombardment, hunger, illness and deprivation crowned by ultimate victory – yet at their level and on their terms across generations and gender.

Given the breadth and sheer length of Palitsyn's account, it is difficult not to see in the siege something of a microcosm of Russia itself or at least that

part of it which would later rise to drive out the foreign invaders. Indeed, he encourages that impression, consciously or not, by beginning with praise for the monastery as part of that Russia which did not sell out either to the Poles or to imposters vying for the throne. Later he enumerates the many cities from which defenders hailed as if God had brought all of them together for this epic battle. From his pen, in other words, the siege reads as a parallel of the greater existential war in which he and his contemporaries could see themselves.

The conditions of the siege itself – a monastery, that is to say, sacred Orthodox land surrounded by foreign enemies and traitors – speak to the predicament of Russia as a whole. It literally is an assault on their faith, and Palitsyn plays with the monastery's name in painting the attackers as 'enemies of the Holy Trinity'. He avidly mixes the terrestrial and divine consequences of attacking so sacred a place, once again enforcing the idea of Russians as a chosen people. When a cannonball flies through the monastery's window, it plows into a triptych, 'nearly clipping Archangel Michael's wing', then ricochets into candles illuminating an icon of the Trinity, and injures a priest before expending itself. The offense, we learn, was taken personally in Heaven above. A wrathful Michael materialises, prophesising: 'So, you faithless ones, now your [impertinence] has reached my image. The all-powerful Lord will have His vengeance'.<sup>18</sup>

The Lord does, saving the monastery from destruction in 1610, just as He would save 'Great Russia' itself two years later. For Palitsyn, a putative sense of Russian-ness blends with the Orthodox faith to the extent that after one successful encounter, he can write with confidence that the enemy has 'suffered defeat from the Russian people, that is, rather from God'.<sup>19</sup> What Palitsyn crafts is, for its time, an unrivalled saga of Russians defending their land and faith and through whom the Holy Spirit works Its wonders. In other words, it is a portrait of Russian Orthodox exceptionalism in action, but at the level of the general populace.

Palitsyn's account represents a key window onto how a collective identity could be imagined in such a critical period of Russia's history, and it leaves the impression that the monastery defenders with whom he spoke afterwards retained the belief of having been part of a miracle, of God's direct intervention on their side, because they upheld their faith which, in turn, defined a proto-national affiliation. To be sure, this is what Palitsyn wants us to believe, but his unprecedented attention to detail and individuals suggests a certain legitimacy in what the ordeal might have meant to defenders of the monastery and to those later in the national militia which liberated Moscow. This does not mean that all on their side embraced the rhetoric propagated by him or the likes of Patriarch Hermogen. Moreover,

the binary categories of Orthodox versus Other that they employed were not always upheld by the reality on the ground since forces were typically multi-confessional. Nevertheless, we do know that at a certain level the fusion of being Orthodox and being Russian, as exemplified here and elsewhere, hardened decisively in what was taken by many to be an apocalyptic time.

## Archetypes and Continuity

With the benefit of hindsight, Palitsyn's contribution to this sentiment stands out – arguably more than any of his contemporaries. Two centuries before Russian nationalism exploded in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, he was already exercising and experimenting in what would become key symbols and motifs for its articulation. In other words, if his work is a manifesto of unbreakable defiance, of necessary resistance against foreign assault, and of the Russian people's astounding ability to withstand any hardship, then already in Palitsyn's hands we see the archetypes that would come to define 1812 in the collective imagination.

Equally striking in this regard is that his approach anticipates how Tolstoy would come to portray 1812 as 'the people's war' *avant la lettre*. A narrative lens that captures the totality of the war's impact on the population; an authorial eye that distinguishes individuals and does not hesitate to delve in details, even unwholesome ones; and a story arc that takes readers from near-disaster to absolute victory – both share this approach. In no way whatsoever, of course, is this to make a claim that *War and Peace* and Palitsyn's account of the siege are of similar quality, but they were, in a sense, cut from the same cloth: chronicling the people's ordeal during a cataclysmic war. This suggests a certain continuity in the idea of how 'Russian-ness' could be articulated across centuries because it is clear that Palitsyn touched a chord. Not for nothing did his history circulate widely and enjoy immense popularity. The large number of surviving copies – sometimes of just the siege itself which was often excerpted and thus distributed – led Sergei Kedrov, a literary scholar and contemporary of Tolstoy, to claim that it was 'a favourite book of our ancestors'.<sup>20</sup> Certainly no other work about the Time of Troubles from an eyewitness has been reprinted and anthologised for subsequent Russian readers to the same degree.

Another contemporary of Tolstoy, Apollon Maikov, essentialised that continuity by appropriating the idea of a besieged monastery as the symbol *par excellence* of a distinctive Russian identity inseparable from war. In his poem 'The Annulled Monastery', the narrator visits its ruins which metaphorically come to life as he travels back in time to the Middle Ages when the lands of

Russia (and much of future Ukraine and Belarus) were known collectively as 'Rus'. Maikov's poetic vision of its history is that of almost continuous foreign incursion, starting with the Mongols in the thirteenth century and running up through the early modern period with its reference to arquebuses and 'the scars of sieges' on its remaining walls. If the narrator asks – 'What speaks from these stones to my soul?' – the answer, in a rousing crescendo, mirrors the heart of Palitsyn's message using the same conceptual framework:

Stand firm! ... and you withstood,  
Holy Rus, all the Lord sent you –  
All the blood and burden,  
Slaughter and pain.

A heavy hammer has forged you  
Into one people – the pounding lasted for centuries.  
But you know that God, out of love,  
Punished you, and by that you are unbreakable.<sup>21</sup>

Notably, the archetypes of the Russian people that we meet on the pages of Palitsyn's history and which helped give shape to nineteenth-century Russian nationalism have not lost their vitality. The monumental sieges of Leningrad and Stalingrad in the Second World War only reaffirmed their iconic status, and in the twenty-first century, amid a newly awakened and resurgent Russia, they continue to serve as a common reference point for national pride by reprising an organic fusion of land, faith and collective identity. As championed today by filmmakers, political leaders, religious authorities and popular historians, the Time of Troubles, so construed, tells a uniquely Russian story – one made more powerful whenever the feeling of isolation and confrontation with the West arise.<sup>22</sup> A significant share of the credit for this endurance arguably belongs to Avraamy Palitsyn and the narrative achievement through which he captured and passed on a truly formative period of Russian history.

## Notes

1. Denis Davydov, *Voennye zapiski* [War Memoirs] (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1982), 91.
2. Sergei Bychkov (ed.), *L. N. Tolstoi v russkoi kritike* [L.N. Tolstoy in Russian Criticism] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952), 297-8.

3. Lev Korneshov, 'Bolshe, chem liubov' [More than Love], *Otchizna* 9 (1978), 3.
4. Lev Tolstoy, *Voina i mir* [War and Peace], *Sobranie sochinenii v 22-i tomakh*, [Collected Works in 22 Volumes] vol. 7 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1981), 181.
5. On this tendency, which began even before 1812, see Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla* [Feeding the Two-Headed Eagle] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 157-186.
6. Anon., 'Novaia povest' o preslavnom Rossiiskom tsarstve' [The New Tale about the Glorious Russian Tsardom], in D.S. Likhachev et al. (eds.), *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi* [The Library of Ancient Russian Literature], vol. 14 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2006), 150-179, at 159, 163.
7. Anon., 163.
8. Chester S. L. Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War. The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2001), 475. See also the conclusion of Isiah Gruber: 'Russia' as defined by Patriarch Hermogen became the main rallying cry for a national reunification – in essence, the resurrection of Russia itself'. Isiah Gruber, *Orthodox Russian in Crisis. Church and Nation in the Time of Troubles* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012), 165. The classic exposition of the militia as a national-liberational one is Sergei Platonov's *The Time of Troubles. A Historical Study of the Internal Crisis and Social Struggle in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Muscovy* (1970; 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1983), 123ff. It was first published in the Soviet Union in 1923.
9. Michael Cherniavsky, "Holy Russia:" A Study in the History of an Idea', *American Historical Review* 63 (1958) 3, 617-37.
10. The full text of Palitsyn's history is contained in L. V. Cherepnina (ed.), *Skazanie Avraamiia Palitsyna* [The Narrative of Avraamy Palitsyn] (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955).
11. The most recent and extensively annotated reprint of Palitsyn's account of the siege as a self-standing narrative is in D.S. Likhachev et al. (eds.), *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi*, vol. 14, 238-355, where it is given the title *Skazanie Avraamiia Palitsyna ob osade Troitse-Sergieva monastyria* [The Narrative of Avraamy Palitsyn on the Siege of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery]. Subsequent references here are to this version.
12. Dmitri Chizhevski, *History of Russian Literature from the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque* (1960; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1971), 312.
13. Palitsyn, *On the Siege*, 283.
14. *Ibid.*, 263.
15. *Ibid.*, 277.
16. *Ibid.*, 307.
17. *Ibid.*, 267, 269, 292, 283, respectively.
18. *Ibid.*, 279.
19. *Ibid.*, 341.

20. Sergei Kedrov, 'Avramii Palitsyn, kak pisatel'. Novoe issledovanie' [Avraamy Palitsyn as a Writer. New Findings], *Russkii arkhiv* 8 (1886), 441-524, at 519.
21. Apollon Maikov, 'Uprazdnennyi monastyr' [The Annulled Monastery], *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* [Selected Works] (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel, 1977), 366-72.
22. On the use of the Time of Troubles in twenty-first-century Russia, see Gregory Carleton, 'History Done Right: War and the Dynamics of Triumphalism in Contemporary Russian Culture', *Slavic Review* 70.3 (2011), 615-36; and 'Forever a Time of Troubles', *History Today* 65.2 (2015), 28-35.

## 8 Exiled Trojans or the Sons of Gomer

Wales's Origins in the long Eighteenth Century<sup>1</sup>

*Adam Coward*

From December 2007 to March 2014, the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff hosted an exhibition on Wales's origins. Covering a period from the dawn of the 'homo' genus to the Middle Ages, the exhibition defined those living within modern political boundaries as Welsh.<sup>2</sup> There was no attempt to construct a monolithic narrative of Welshness, but rather the exhibition linked cultural discontinuities within physical space and common humanity, reflecting a modern multicultural construction of Wales. This was particularly interesting given the exhibition's physical contexts. It was hosted by Wales's oldest national museum which was established in 1907, at a time when several Welsh national institutions were created.<sup>3</sup> Adjacent and roughly contemporaneous to the museum is Cardiff City Hall, which has housed a *Pantheon of National Heroes* in its Marble Hall since 1916. Among this statuary appear heroes of the primitive Welsh church (St. David), nonconformity (William Williams, Pantycelyn), poetry (Dafydd ap Gwilym), lost independence (Llywelyn Olaf) and indomitable spirit (Owain Glyndŵr).<sup>4</sup> Across from the museum stands a stone circle, constructed in 1899 for a ceremony of the Gorsedd of the Bards in connection with the National Eisteddfod, a revived medieval cultural festival.<sup>5</sup> The Gorsedd, a venerable institution complete with druids, bards and ovates, had originated a century earlier as a late-eighteenth-century cultural invention.<sup>6</sup> Each of these displays signifiers of Welsh nationhood tied to ideas of Wales's origins; origins which very much depended on the perspective from which the Welsh past was viewed, within contemporary values and identities. This process of redefining origins in accordance with changing culture and society can be seen occurring across the long eighteenth century, in a period when Wales underwent a concerted process of reconceptualisation arising from a renewed cultural awareness and new understandings of history and ethnicity.

Anthony D. Smith has discussed the importance of national 'myths', either of descent from a notable ancestor or of a 'golden age' which exhibits the values of the people, in constructing and maintaining national identity.<sup>7</sup> He further notes that 'The content of the myths may gradually change, ... yet the myths themselves endure and acquire new elements and are subject to



continuous elaboration.<sup>8</sup> By the eighteenth century, the medieval account of Wales's origins was not guaranteed survival, as changing scholarly views and the alteration of Wales's cultural and social landscape rendered many of its elements unpalatable or untenable. Still, the idea of a noble and ancient past remained important to ideas of Welshness: as Prys Morgan has noted, 'To a people with little present, and no future, the discovery of the distant past was electrifying.'<sup>9</sup> By stressing an idiosyncratic history, the Welsh legitimised their claim to nationhood, whilst the links between their own history and those of other nations placed them within wider narratives of European history and civilisation. Elements of both the 'ideological' and 'genealogical' myths can be seen in the changing conceptualisations of Welsh origins.<sup>10</sup> While the idea of a noble progenitor of Wales remained a salient feature, the construction and presentation of Wales's origin reacted and altered in accordance with changing ideological values, including the idea of Celticism, the influence of Christianity, the rise of antiquarianism, and the process of romantic forgery and invention.

### The Fall of Wales's Trojan Origins

Noting the cultural shifts within which a heightened interest in Welsh history and culture led to the construction of new identities, Prys Morgan has referred to this period as the 'eighteenth-century renaissance'. In London, several groups of patriotic Welshmen emerged, notably the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion from 1751, and the Gwyneddigion Society from 1770. Providing an expatriate Welsh community, these societies helped to forge a sense of Welshness by emphasising Welsh language, literature, music, popular antiquities and history, often patronising works on these subjects and creating a space for their discussion. The medieval bardic competition, the *eisteddfod*, was also revived, particularly by the Gwyneddigion Society from 1789. These interests were also reflected by writers within Wales as interest in local studies blossomed. Much of this antiquarian interest, particularly the rediscovery of Celts and Druids, had a bearing on the idea of Welsh origins.<sup>11</sup>

The reconceptualisation of Welshness was necessitated by the discounting of Welsh history, or else its appropriation under wider Britishness, throughout the early modern period. Henry Tudor had utilised Welsh history to legitimate his kingship. Tracing his descent from Cadwaladr, the last king of Britain, Henry unfurled the Red Dragon of Cadwaladr at Bosworth and incorporated it into the Tudor royal seal. This was a conscious nod to

Welsh prophecy, both framing Henry as the *Mab Darogan* (Son of Prophecy), who would reclaim the island, and the return of Arthur, emphasised by Henry naming his eldest son after the legendary king.<sup>12</sup> Welsh claims to be Britain's first Christians were similarly appropriated by the Anglican Church, which craved a link to pre-Roman Catholic Christianity.<sup>13</sup> The Welsh language too came under threat from external criticism and the increasing Anglicisation of the Welsh gentry.<sup>14</sup>

Wales's origin myth, as related in Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, was also challenged – largely discredited by the sixteenth-century Italian-English historian Polydore Vergil.<sup>15</sup> According to Geoffrey, the Welsh were the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain, led there by the exiled Trojan Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas. Brutus discovered a group of enslaved Trojans in Greece and led them in an uprising, freeing them and defeating the Greek king. Sailing around Europe he gathered more exiled Trojans, before reaching Britain to which he gave his name. The legend also provided onomastic rationales for Britain's four nations: Cornwall was named for Cornelius, the leader of a band of Trojans who had joined Brutus, while England (*Lloegr*), Scotland (*yr Alban*) and Wales (*Cymru*) were the lands ruled by Brutus's sons, Locrinus, Albanactus and Kamber.<sup>16</sup>

Given the shifting views and values of the eighteenth century, it is interesting that new origin myths reflected many of the elements and themes of earlier conceptualisations of Welsh identity, including the Brutus story. The Welsh language remained an important signifier of Welsh idiosyncrasy, and was even imbued with new meanings and perceptions. Wales's special relationship with Christianity not only endured, but was expanded and lengthened. The idea of the Welsh as aboriginal Britons remained paramount, as it differentiated them from later invaders. Some myths reflected contemporary scholarly theory, and as the period was marked by improved communication networks and an increasingly interconnected world,<sup>17</sup> Welsh origins became more inter- and transnational.

## Celts and Druids: The Welsh as the Descendants of Gomer

Even at the beginning of this period, external influence combined with local thought, connecting Welsh origins with Celticism. In 1703, the Breton scholar Paul Pezron published his *Antiquité de la Nation* (English translation, 1706), followed soon after by the Oxford-based Welsh scholar Edward Lhuyd's *Archæologia Britannica* (1707). The scholarship of the two works

was worlds apart, but both identified Welsh as a Celtic language, with Lhuyd noting the relation between Welsh, Breton, Cornish, Gaelic and Gaulish. Lhuyd was a meticulous and sceptical scholar, characterised by his insistence on first-hand observation, careful recording of information, and aversion to theorisation without extensive evidence.<sup>18</sup> Only the first volume of his *Archæologia Britannica* ever appeared, but it did much to establish the Celticism of the Welsh language. Mainly consisting of lists of words and etymological comparisons interspersed with essays, Lhuyd's work proved obtuse to many later scholars, but its overarching message contributed markedly to later conceptualisations of Welsh origins.<sup>19</sup> Pezron, while similarly utilising etymology, was prone to speculation. Citing mythology and scripture, he claimed the Celtic people were descended from Gomer, son of Japhet and grandson of Noah, who migrated into Europe after the fall of Babel. This was not a new idea, as seventeenth-century Welsh writers like John Davies of Mallwyd and Charles Edwards had espoused similar theories, but here the Celtic element gave it new legitimacy.<sup>20</sup> Pezron claimed that these Gomarians were men of great stature and importance in Antiquity, and travelling from Asia through Greece and Italy they entered Classical mythology as Titans. Pezron not only connected Celtic, within which he included Welsh, with Scripture but also with the Classical world, much as Geoffrey had:

A strange Thing, that so ancient a Language should now be spoken by the *American Britons* in *France*, and by the Ancien [sic] *Britons* in *Wales*: These are the People who have the Honour to preserve the Language of the Posterity of *Gomer*, *Japhet's* Eldest Son, and the Nephew of *Shem*, the Language of those Princes called *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, who passed for great Deities among the Ancients.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, by linking the Welsh with Celtic, and thus with Gaul, and the migrations of the descendants of Gomer after the flood, they became not just the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain, but most of western Europe. It is little surprise that these bold pronouncements had a greater impact over the succeeding century than Lhuyd's etymological tables.<sup>22</sup>

Many of these ideas entered into Welsh popular consciousness just a decade later. In 1716 Theophilus Evans published his *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*, the most popular Welsh-language history for over a century.<sup>23</sup> Beginning his history with Genesis, Evans situated Welsh origins after the fall of Babel with the language: 'And who do you suppose spoke Welsh in that time but *Gomer*, *Japhet's* eldest son'.<sup>24</sup> Derived from the name Gomer, his progeny

became Gomeri or Cymru, and following roughly the path described by Pezron, settled in France, Britain and Ireland. Moreover, it should be noted that Evans was not only a passionate Welsh patriot, but also a stark Anglican,<sup>25</sup> and the myth of Gomer situated the Welsh within his Christian, Protestant narrative of history. Evans also reflected Lhuyd's arguments about the relationship between Welsh and Irish Gaelic, arguing that the arrival of the Trojan Brutus, after whom the island had been named, had imported Greek words while the Romans had brought Latin, causing the difference between the languages of Britain and Ireland.<sup>26</sup> Throughout his work, Evans also returned to Geoffrey's history, along with other early Welsh and Classical sources, offering a defence against English critics and connecting Welsh antiquity with the Classical world.<sup>27</sup> By combining the myths of Gomer and Brutus, Evans united contemporary theory and traditional historiography, and he appropriated the values and meanings embedded in both stories.

Building upon the biblically-based account of Gomer, an important contribution was made by Henry Rowlands's *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (1723) which identified Rowlands's native Anglesey as the seat of ancient druidism. The druids received much antiquarian attention in the period, notably in the works of John Toland and William Stukeley.<sup>28</sup> As a symbol of Welshness, a druid appeared as a standard-bearer on the title page of the Cymmrodorion Society's Constitution in 1755.<sup>29</sup> Providing etymological comparisons between Welsh and Hebrew and historical comparisons between descriptions of druidic and Old Testament practices of worship, Rowlands argued that Welsh druids had received and maintained the antediluvian religion of the patriarchs, bolstering Wales's religious credentials. Drawing from Pezron, he described the migrations of Gomer's descendants to Britain.<sup>30</sup> He also utilised the work of Lhuyd, with whom he had corresponded,<sup>31</sup> noting:

These two now mentioned gentlemen, having by different methods opened a way of resolving diverse tongues in Europe to one mother-language, which language indeed Mr. *Lhwyd* leaves modestly undecided, but by Monsieur Pezron is determined to be the Celtic; I hoped my pains would not be ill spent, if I endeavoured by the demonstration of this table to mount it one step higher; that is, to resolve that (our first distinguished Gomerian) into the very original and fountain-head of all, the most ancient patriarchal Hebrew tongue.<sup>32</sup>

However, like Evans, he also took note of Brutus. Citing the unreliability of ancient texts, Rowlands denied Brutus's claim to aboriginal status whilst

allowing that it was 'very probable' that he led a group of Greeks to the island and gave it his name.<sup>33</sup>

Despite Rowlands's doubts, wider British and European developments soon lent new legitimacy to ancient texts. From 1760, James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry had a profound effect on European literatures, and Wales was no exception.<sup>34</sup> In 1764 Evan Evans published his *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards*:

When I saw that one of the *wild Scottish Highlanders*, and also a learned Englishman, had translated the work of their old bards to English, I thought that it was not fitting that we, the *Welsh*, who have some authentic ancient poetry of our own, are utterly unconcerned in this case: because, as far as I know, that it is the only masterpiece of art which our ancestors have left us, without being lost.<sup>35</sup>

Catherine McKenna has noted that this work cannot be seen exclusively in the context of Ossian, as Evans's collection built upon earlier eighteenth-century publications such as Lewis Morris's *Thysauyr Hen Oesoedd* (1735).<sup>36</sup> Still, while claiming that he meant 'not to set the following poems in competition' with Macpherson's works, and that his book was 'first thought of ... some years before the name of Ossian was known in England',<sup>37</sup> persistent references to the literature of the Scottish highlands and comments on the antiquity of Welsh literature place Evans's work within this discourse.<sup>38</sup> He was also critical, noting, 'I fear, after all, that the *highlander* is throwing a cloak over men's eyes, and that they are not as old as he asserts they are'.<sup>39</sup> Despite a lack of direct comment on origins, this paradigmatic shift had ramifications for the perception of Wales's ancient history. By looking to the vernacular literature of the nation, hitherto unknown information not contained in Latin or English texts could be excavated.

## Reinventing Welsh Origins in the Age of Romanticism

Like the 'ancient' literatures of many nations in this period, these sources were largely inaccessible, locked away either in private collections or foreign libraries, such as Oxford. Welsh scholars therefore made concerted efforts to publish this material. The most notable early work was the three-volume *Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales* (1801-07). This was the product of three Welshmen: Owen Jones (Owen Myvyr), who largely financed it; William Owen Pughe, who edited the material; and Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg),

who 'procured' the contents.<sup>40</sup> Much of the material in the collection was authentic and the product of extensive research, but some was also invented by Iolo, notably sections of the 'third series of triads', which included information on Wales's origins. Indeed, many of these triads, a genuine Welsh and Irish literary form which grouped information in threes, were authentic, albeit elaborated and embellished with Iolo's mythology. Only a fraction was fabrication.<sup>41</sup> Materials in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* were not Iolo's only inventions: his most enduring creation was the Gorsedd of the Bards of the Isle of Britain, a body which was supposed to have preserved knowledge from antiquity to the present, allowing access to the spirit of Wales's original forefathers. Indeed, Prys Morgan has noted that, for Iolo, 'history was archaism, but it was also continuity'.<sup>42</sup> Morgan identified different strains which made up Iolo's historiography and conceptualisation of Welsh origins. These included the triads, medieval histories, the 'Protestant myth' of Welsh history, and antiquarianism, especially Druidism, Celticism and folk traditions.<sup>43</sup> He was also familiar with the works that have been discussed here: he rejected much of Geoffrey, especially the Brutus myth, and was familiar with the works of Lhuyd, Pezron, Theophilus Evans, Rowlands and Evan Evans, among many others.<sup>44</sup> Iolo's contributions to Wales's origins and early history were at once historical and contemporary, and his ideas quickly entered into wider discussion. Much of his bardic material found a place in William Owen Pughe's *Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces of Llywarch Hen* (1792). Likewise, the triads were taken up almost instantly: in Pughe's *Cambrian Biography* (1803), which featured entries for these mythic characters, as well as Edward 'Celtic' Davies's *Celtic Researches* (1804).

Several mythic figures appeared prominently in Iolo's triads, notably Hu Gadarn, Prydain ap Aedd Mawr, and Dyfnwal Moelmud. These characters were not without historical basis. Hu Gadarn was mentioned by the fourteenth-century bard Iolo Goch, whilst Geoffrey of Monmouth had discussed 'Dunvallo Molmutius who established among the Britons the so-called Molmutian Laws which are still famous today among the English'.<sup>45</sup> All three featured in a triad on the 'Three Pillars of National Compact':

*First* HU THE MIGHTY, who first conducted the Nation of the CYMMRY to the Island of Britain, and they came from the SUMMER COUNTRY otherwise called DEFFROBANI, where now Constantinople is, and they came over the HAZY SEA into the Island of Britain and to LLYDAW (*where they remained*). The *second* was PRYDAIN SON OF AEDD THE GREAT who first instituted Government and social compact in the Island of Britain, before which time there was no regular order, excepting what

might take place of free Courtesy nor any Law but that of Superior force. The *third* was DYVNWAL MOELMUD who first reduced to order the Laws and Injunctions and Rights and Immunities of the Nation and Country.<sup>46</sup>

These were not the only accomplishments of Iolo's heroes. Hu Gadarn was credited with bringing ploughing, cultivation and the practice of using verse for the purposes of memory and preservation to the Welsh, and drawing the Avanc (a water monster) out of the lake Llyn Llion, preventing the floods which it caused.<sup>47</sup> He was also considered to be a god, if not the primary god, of the ancient Welsh.<sup>48</sup> In addition to dealing with individuals, the triads also discussed the various peoples who had settled the island. The first to arrive were the 'Three Pacific Tribes', the Cymry, the Lloegrwys and the Brython. All three 'were of the original stock of the Cymmry', but the Cymry came first even among the original settlers.<sup>49</sup> These peoples were contrasted with later settlers and invaders. In particular, the peaceful settlement of the Cymry was distinguished from later conquests accomplished by treachery, deceit and violence.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, much of Iolo's material and interpretations mirrored his politics and vision of Wales, which favoured liberty, equality and peace. His founders of Wales reflected these values, settling Britain peacefully and ruling through social compact.

These characters echoed and, to a certain extent, were conflated with both the myths of Brutus and Gomer, both by Iolo and other contemporary writers. Pughe's *Cambrian Biography* referred to Brutus as a misidentification of Prydain ap Aedd Mawr. Consequently, he rejected Brutus's Trojan origins, noting that the early chroniclers who recorded the Brutus myth 'may well be pardoned for not having been able to discriminate the true meaning of the ancient allegory of Troy, as the same error was adopted by the Romans'.<sup>51</sup> Hu Gadarn was more comparable to Gomer. The triad, 'the three arduous Achievements', featured the ship of Nefydd Naf Neifion, which held the male and female of every animal when Llyn Llion flooded the world, and the drawing of the Afanc from that lake by Hu Gadarn's hunched oxen (*Ychain Banog*), preventing further floods.<sup>52</sup> This connection with the Flood, along with Hu's role in leading the Welsh to western Europe, furthered this similarity to Gomer, and situated him within Welsh history rather than wider Christian tradition.

Edward Davies's *Celtic Researches* contained a lengthy discussion of the dispersal of peoples following the Flood and the fall of Babel. Discussing the universal belief in Giants (or Titans), he did not consider them the ancestors of the Celts, as Pezron had, but rather those people who had been dispersed from Babel.<sup>53</sup> He did, however, consider Gomer to be the



progenitor of the Celts.<sup>54</sup> He also did not believe Celtic and Hebrew to be related, but asserted that Hebrew's claim to be the Ur-language was impossible owing to changes which all languages undergo over time, questioning whether any language could be considered more sacred than another.<sup>55</sup> Still, he noted that the druids had preserved 'many of the vital and essential principles' of the primitive religion,<sup>56</sup> and echoed Rowlands's assertion that their seat was on Anglesea.<sup>57</sup> Davies saw the world's religions as a monomyth arising from memory of the Deluge and used Iolo's triads extensively to support his vision of the Gomerian myth by comparing Noah to Hu, the '*figurative* conductor' of the Welsh to Britain.<sup>58</sup> He continued these arguments in his *Rites and Mythology of the British Druids* (1809), in which he devoted almost a hundred pages to illustrating this comparison and Hu's importance.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, Davies was critical of Iolo's material in this later work, particularly Bardism:<sup>60</sup> 'A slight inquiry into the credentials of this society itself, will discover some marks of gross misrepresentation, if not absolute forgery'.<sup>61</sup> He took further umbrage with the political biases he detected in Iolo's conclusions, remarking that the pacifist, liberal, radical sentiments displayed in Bardism could not be an ancient feature.<sup>62</sup> Still, Davies was willing to put the (forged) manuscript material provided by Iolo in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* and elsewhere to good use, especially Iolo's invented Bardic Alphabet (*Coelbren y Beirdd*), as it fit well into his own theories concerning Welsh origins and history.<sup>63</sup> He embedded both authentic and forged primary sources within contemporary scholarly discourses concerning history, mythology and Celticism. Eschewing Iolo's interpretation, Davies discussed Hu Gadarn in the context of theories by contemporary scholars like Sharon Turner, George Stanley Faber, Jacob Bryant, Charles Vallancey and Paul Henri Mallet. Thus these sources passed from the romantic forger Iolo into the developing scholarly fields of mythology and ethnic history, not only illustrating Welsh origins, but wider theories on the origins of religion.

## Conclusion

Iolo's vision of history remained popular with Welsh romantic scholars, particularly from the mid-nineteenth century. As Marion Löffler has noted, 'The counterfeit material Iolo had added to the sources of Welsh history came to the aid of Welsh scholars in their search for a core historical narrative in a century during which Romanticism and nationalism jointly created



a sustained demand for a historicist view of nationhood.<sup>64</sup> Material by Iolo appeared in print throughout this period. His son, Taliesin Williams (ab Iolo), published his father's major work on Bardism, *Cyfrinach Beirdd Ynys Prydain* (1829), and began editing the *Iolo Manuscripts* (1848) at the behest of the Welsh Manuscript Society, although the work was completed by Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc) and John Williams (ab Ithel). This society, established in 1837, was responsible for publishing much Ioloic material, including Ab Ithel's *Barddas* (1862).<sup>65</sup> In 1853, Lady Augusta Hall of Llanover purchased the Iolo Manuscripts, making them available to scholars at Llanover Hall. In the same year, Ab Ithel established the *Cambrian Journal* which published many articles on Iolo and his materials.<sup>66</sup> Still, even as Iolo's accounts enjoyed popularity with romanticist scholars, they faced new controversy and critique,<sup>67</sup> notably from Thomas Stephens, the first modern Welsh scholar.

Arising from his extensive reading of and correspondence with European scholars, Stephens's revolutionary critical treatment of medieval Welsh literature disproved the historical legitimacy of much of Iolo's work, including characters like Hu Gadarn, Prydain ap Aedd Mawr and Dyfnwal Moelmud.<sup>68</sup> This approach to the Welsh past reflected the new views and values of Welsh identity and scholarship, just as the evolving myths of Welsh origins had throughout the eighteenth century. As Löf-fler has stated, 'Even the comprehensive critique of Iolo's legacy ... was part of the process of national legitimization since it allowed professional Welsh scholars to correct their historical narrative along scientific lines.'<sup>69</sup> Indeed, in defending his controversial 1858 eisteddfod essay disproving the discovery of America by the twelfth-century Welshman Madoc ap Owain Gwynedd, Stephens stated that 'he would still continue to urge strongly and persistently every merit honestly pertaining to the history or national character of the Kymry ... but he thought it lowered them as a people, to be arguing claims which they could not prove'.<sup>70</sup> Further developments in nineteenth-century Welsh historiography continued to reflect changing ideas of Welshness and the origins of the nation. Just as earlier ideas of Welsh origins like the myths of Brutus and Gomer had an indelible place in eighteenth-century reimaginings, many of the ideas of this period continued to have a powerful influence on Welsh identity and self-perception. The values which constitute the Welsh nation are still reflected in modern representations tied to ideas of its genesis, like the Gorsedd of the Bards, a hall of heroic statuary, national institutions, and even a twenty-first-century exhibition on Wales's origins.

## Notes

1. Research for this article was undertaken at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies as part of the Leverhulme-funded project 'Knowledge Transfer and Social Networks: European Learning and the Revolution in Welsh-Victorian Scholarship'. The author would like to thank the Leverhulme Trust for funding this research.
2. See David R. Howell, 'The Heritage Industry in a Politically Devolved Wales' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Wales, 2014), 2-3.
3. See Douglas A. Basset, 'The Making of a National Museum', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1982), 153-85; Prys Morgan, 'The Creation of the National Museum and National Library', in John Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007); Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 108-15.
4. Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Imaging the Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 337-8.
5. 'A Unique Gorsedd Ceremony', *Weekly Mail*, 22 July 1899.
6. This will be discussed further below.
7. Anthony D. Smith, 'Ethnic Myths and Ethnic Revivals', *European Journal of Sociology* 25/2 (November 1984), 283-305; Idem, 'National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent', in Idem (ed.), *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 57-95.
8. Smith, 'Ethnic Myths and Ethnic Revivals', 286.
9. Prys Morgan, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', in Tony Curtis (ed.), *Wales: The Imagined Nation: Studies in Cultural and National Identity* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), 19-41, at 28.
10. Smith, 'Myths of Ethnic Descent', 71.
11. See Prys Morgan, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1981), esp. 67ff; Idem, 'From Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012 [1983]), 43-100, esp. 56-92.
12. Morgan, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 17; Idem, 'From Death to a View', 46; Idem, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', 23-4; Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Black Raven Press, 1985), 117.
13. Morgan, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 17; Idem, 'From Death to a View', 46; Idem, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', 25; Williams, *When was Wales?*, 127.
14. Morgan, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 19-22; Idem, 'From Death to a View', 47-8.
15. Idem, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 17; Idem, 'From Death to a View', 47; Idem, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', 24; Williams, *When was Wales?*, 123; D.

- Ellis Evans, 'Theophilus Evans ar hanes cynnar Prydain', *Y Traethodydd*, 128: 547 (1973), 92-113, at 99-100.
16. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 54-75.
  17. Geraint H. Jenkins, 'The Eighteenth Century', in Philip Henry Jones and Eiluned Rees (eds.), *A Nation and its Books: A History of the Book in Wales* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1998), 109-122, at 112-3; Branwen Jarvis, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Cultural Background', in Geraint H. Jenkins, *Rattleskull Genius: The Many Faces of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 29-49, at 37; Catherine McKenna, 'Aspects of Tradition Formation in Eighteenth-Century Wales', in Joseph Falaky Nagy (ed.), *Memory and the Modern in Celtic Literatures: CSANA Yearbook 5* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 37-60, at 38-9.
  18. Frank Emery, *Edward Lhuyd 1660-1709* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1971), 21-9.
  19. Edward Lhuyd, *Archæologia Britannica, giving some Account additional to what has been hitherto Publish'd of the Languages, Histories and Customs of the Original Inhabitants of Great Britain* (Oxford: printed at the Theater for the Author, 1707), esp. preface (unpaginated). Morgan, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 69, 108; Emery, *Edward Lhuyd*, 82-3.
  20. Morgan, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', 25; Williams, *When was Wales?*, 129-30. It should be noted that this was the first published use of the concept of 'Celts' and Celtic nations in their modern sense. P.T.J. Morgan, 'The Abbé Pezron and the Celts', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1965), 286-95, at 293.
  21. Paul Pezron, *The Antiquities of Nations; More particularly of the Celtæ or Gauls, Taken to be Originally the same People as our Ancient Britains*, trans. by David Jones (London: R. Janeway for S. Ballard and R. Burrough, 1706), xii-xiii.
  22. Morgan, 'The Abbé Pezron and the Celts'; Idem, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 108. Emery, *Edward Lhuyd*, 82-3.
  23. Evans, 'Theophilus Evans ar hanes cynnar Prydain', 92, 103; Geraint H. Jenkins, 'Historical Writing in the Eighteenth Century', in Branwen Jarvis (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature c. 1700-1800* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 23-44, here 27-8; Morgan, *Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, 89-90; Idem, 'From Death to a View', 68.
  24. 'A phwy oedd yn siarad *Cymraeg* y dybiwch chwi y pryd hwnnw ond *Gomer*, mab hynaf *Japhet*'. Theophilus Evans, *Drych y Prif Oesoedd yn ôl yr argraffiaf cyntaf: 1716*, ed. Garfield H. Hughes (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1961), 19 [my translation].
  25. Evans, 'Theophilus Evans ar hanes cynnar Prydain', 102, 107; Gwyn Thomas, 'Two Prose Writers: Ellis Wynne and Theophilus Evans', in Jarvis (ed.), *Guide to Welsh Literature*, 45-63, here 56-7.
  26. *Ibid.*, 20-3.

27. Evans, 'Theophilus Evans ar hanes cynnar Prydain', 103; Jenkins, 'Historical Writing in the Eighteenth Century', 27-8.
28. See Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 140-76; Idem, *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination: Ideas from the Renaissance to the Regency* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), esp. 139-46; Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 124-36.
29. Anon., *Constitutions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in London* (London: John Oliver, 1755).
30. Ibid., 291-7.
31. Jenkins, 'History Writing in the Eighteenth Century', 31; R.T. Gunther, *Early Science in Oxford: Vol. XIV, Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd Second Keeper of the Musæum Ashmoleanum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), 187-90, at 39-40, 480-3, 530.
32. Rowlands, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*, 296.
33. Ibid., 196.
34. See Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Ossian in Wales and Brittany', in Howard Gaskill (ed.), *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2004), 67-90, esp. 68-83.
35. 'Pan welais fod un o Ysgodogion Ucheldir Alban, ac hefyd Sais dysgedig, wedi cyfieithi Gwaith eu hen Feirdd i'r Saesoneg; mi a dybygais mai nid gweddus i ni, y Cymry, y rhai sydd genym Gerddi awduraidd, gorhenaidd, o'r einom, fod yn llwyr ddiymdro yn y cyngaws hwnw: o herwydd, hyd i gwn i, dyna'r ynnig ragorgamp celfyddyd a adawodd ein hynafiaid ini, sydd heb ei colli.' Evan Evans, *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1764), 101 [my translation].
36. McKenna, 'Aspects of Tradition Formation', 57. See also, Ffion Llwllyn Jenkins, 'Celticism and Pre-Romanticism: Evan Evans', in Jarvis (ed.) *Guide to Welsh Literature*, 104-25, at 118.
37. Evans, *Some Specimens*, i.
38. Constantine, 'Ossian in Wales and Brittany', 92-4; McKenna, 'Aspects of Tradition Formation', 56; Sweet, *Antiquaries*, 140.
39. 'i mae arnaf ofn, wedi'r cwbl, fod yr Ysgodion yn bwrw hug ar lygaid dynion, ac nad ydynt mor hen ag i mae ef yn taeru eu bod.' Evans, *Some Specimens*, 104. [my translation].
40. See Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Welsh Literary History and the Making of "The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales"', *European Studies*, 26 (2006), 109-28.
41. Rachel Bromwich, 'Trioedd Ynys Prydain' in *Welsh Literature and Scholarship* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), 18.
42. Prys Morgan, 'Iolo Morganwg and Welsh Historical Tradition', in Jenkins, *Rattleskull Genius*, 251-68, at 262.
43. Ibid., 252-5. See also Jarvis, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Cultural Background'.

44. Morgan, 'Iolo Morganwg and Welsh Historical Tradition'; Jarvis, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Cultural Background'.
45. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, 89. 'Dyfnwal Moel' is mentioned in a long list of warriors named in the Arthurian tale of Culhwch ac Olwen, but as this was not well-known in the period, it is unlikely that Iolo took the name from here. Sioned Davies (trans.), *The Mabinogion* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), 186; Rachel Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain: The Myvyrian "Third Series" (I)', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1968, part 2), 299-338, at 322-4; Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain', 21-5.
46. Translation by Iolo Morganwg, quoted in Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain', 303. See also Owen Jones (Myvyr), Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg) and William Owen Pughe (Idrison) (eds.), *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales: Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts*, ed. John Thomas (Pencerdd Gwalia) (new edition) (Denbigh: Thomas Gee, 1870), 400.
47. Rachel Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain: The Myvyrian "Third Series" (II)', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1969, part 1), 127-56, at 129, 139-40; Jones, Williams and Pughe (eds.) *Myvyrian Archaiology*, 406, 409.
48. William Owen, *The Cambrian Biography* (London: 1803, E. Williams), 178; J. Williams (Ab Ithel) (ed.) *Barddas; or, a Collection of Original Documents, Illustrative of the Theology, Wisdom, and Usages of the Bard-Druidic System* (Llandovery: Welsh MSS Society, 1862), 220-1.
49. Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain (I)', 303-4; Jones, Williams and Pughe (eds.), *Myvyrian Archaiology*, 400.
50. Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain (I)', 303-5; Jones, Williams and Pughe (eds.), *Myvyrian Archaiology*, 400-1; Rachel Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain' in *Welsh Literature and Scholarship* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), 17-8.
51. Owen, *The Cambrian Biography*, 28. This is especially interesting as Rachel Bromwich has noted that 'The origin of these names [Prydain and Aedd Mawr] is entirely obscure, but it does seem possible that some early antiquarian tale was once in existence about Prydain fab Aedd as an eponymous colonizer of Britain, and that this was deliberately set aside and rejected by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the interests of the rival story about Brutus'. Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain', 23.
52. Bromwich, 'Triodd Ynys Prydain (II)', 140; Jones, Williams and Pughe (eds.), *Myvyrian Archaiology*, 409.
53. Edward Davies, *Celtic Researches on the Origin, Traditions & Language, of the Ancient Britons* (London: Printed for the Author, 1804), 81-6. He later notes in discussion of the veneration of Titans in some religions that 'It would surely be absurd to explain it away by the incoherent scraps of Greek Tradition, which generally confound the first settlement of the nations with the subsequent wanderings of the exiled Titans.' Ibid., 105.

54. Ibid., 124.
55. Ibid., 91-3.
56. Ibid., 119.
57. Ibid., 141.
58. Ibid., 164-6.
59. Idem, *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids* (London: J. Booth, 1809), 85-182.
60. See Moria Dearnley, "Mad Ned" and the "Smatter-Dasher": Iolo Morganwg and Edward "Celtic" Davies', in Jenkins (ed.) *Rattleskull Genius*, 426-42, at 433-9.
61. Davies, *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, 33.
62. Ibid., 35-7, 56-7.
63. Dearnley, "Mad Ned" and the "Smatter-Dasher", 433-4.
64. Marion Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg, 1826-1926* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 1.
65. Ibid., 81-2, Brynley F. Roberts, "'The Age of Restitution': Taliesin ab Iolo and the Reception of Iolo Morganwg', in Jenkins (ed.), *Rattleskull Genius*, 461-79, at 473-5; Marion Löffler, 'Failed Founding Fathers and Abandoned Sources: Edward Williams, Thomas Stephens and the Young J. E. Lloyd', in Neil Evans and Huw Pryce (eds.), *Writing a Small Nation's Past: Wales in Comparative Perspective, 1850-1950* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 67-81, at 69.
66. Löffler, *Literary and Historic Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, 83-4.
67. Idem, 'Failed Founding Fathers', 70; Idem, *Literary and Historic Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, 130; Prys Morgan, 'Early Victorian Wales and its Crisis of Identity', in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds.), *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 95-109, at 97-8.
68. Thomas Stephens, 'Studies in British Biography I: Dyvynwal Moelmud', *Cambrian Journal*, 1 (Alban Hevin 1854), 160-72; Idem, 'Studies in British Biography II: The Laws of Dyvynwal Moelmud', *Cambrian Journal*, 6 (February 1855), 33-59; Idem, 'Studies in British Biography III: Prydain ab Aedd Mawr', *Cambrian Journal*, 4 (Alban Arthan 1857), 241-67; Idem, 'The Book of Aberpergwm, improperly Called the Chronicle of Caradoc', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, 13 (January 1858), 77-96; Idem, *Literature of the Kymry*, ed. D. Silvan Evans, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), xliii; Bromwich, 'Trioedd Ynys Prydain', 34-42; Löffler, *Literary and Historic Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, 134-7; Idem, 'Failed Founding Fathers', 74.
69. Löffler, *Literary and Historic Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, 2. See also *ibid.*, 130.
70. 'Llangollen Eisteddfod', *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette*, 2 October 1858, 6.



**Part Three**  
Negative Mirror Imaging





## 9 Defining the Nation, Defending the Nation

the Spanish Apologetic Discourse during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621)

*Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez*

Spain is maybe one of the most troubled European nations when it comes to the definition of its national identity. Although most scholars nowadays do not deny that the proto-national roots of Spain are to be found in the early modern period, it has been problematic to accept this perennial concept of Spain within contemporary Spanish historiographical discourse.<sup>1</sup> After the end of the Franco regime, with its famous motto 'España, una, grande y libre', historians focused their research on the roots of all peripheric nations within Spain, from the nineteenth century and before, but not of 'Spain' as a whole.<sup>2</sup> The eminent English historian Sir John Elliott warned in 2001 about the threatening fragmentation of the history of Spain, should everybody in the country continue to concentrate only on particular 'regional' / 'national' histories.<sup>3</sup> Although in the literary field the great critic José Antonio Maravall had already argued decades earlier that a proto-national notion of Spain was distinctly present in Golden Age Spanish theatre, the field of history remained dominated by the modernist vision of nationalism for a long time.<sup>4</sup> Recent books like *Ser españoles. Imaginarios Nacionalistas en el siglo XX*, although focusing on the twentieth century, reveal that the tide has changed and that talking about 'Spanish nationalism' does not imply being a right-wing, chauvinist zealot.<sup>5</sup> In my own research about Spanish perceptions of the Dutch Revolt and the ensuing Eighty Years' War in the early modern period, I concluded that the hetero-images of the Dutch enemy were clearly intertwined with the construction of a clear and well-defined Spanish national identity. The Spaniards in the Spanish sources, both historical and literary, were frequently addressed and bundled together as 'we' (nosotros), and Spain was 'nuestra España' or 'nuestra nación' (our Spain, our nation). Moreover, those 'españoles' embodied ancient virtues, such as insurmountable bellicosity, loyalty to their kings and devout religiosity, amongst other qualities. These positive qualities distinguished them from other peoples and from their enemies.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, Hispanists and also literary historians in general have expressed a growing interest in tracing

the emergence of a Spanish 'nation' through constructions of community in literary works.<sup>7</sup> In the following I will focus on the above-mentioned Hispano-Dutch historical context to illustrate how the definition or construction of the Spanish nation took shape during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-21). The dialectical relationship between friends and foes is a basic principle of international confrontation and produces images about the 'other' and the 'self' that play a fundamental role in the forging of national identities.<sup>8</sup> The truce was experienced as a great fiasco for the Spaniards and as a painful blemish on the Spanish reputation. Therefore many writers reflected on the situation of Spain and on the correct course to follow in the future. The nation had to be defended, healed, preserved, etc., as was frequently argued at the time.

Particularly significant for that Spanish discourse was the prevalence of strong criticism of Spain all over Europe. Defining the nation went, in the case of the Spanish monarchy, hand in hand with defending the nation. To illustrate the dynamics of this process, I will touch upon four relevant sources. Two were composed at the beginning of the truce: the humanist political tract *España defendida* (*Spain defended*) by the greatest Spanish satirist Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas (1580-1645) and the epic poem *La Jerusalén Conquistada*, by Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1562-1635), the Spanish Shakespeare, both composed around 1609.<sup>9</sup> The other two sources are political tracts produced when the ceasefire was coming to a close, and were written by so-called *arbitristas* or reformist authors who reflected on all possible solutions for the problems of Spain: *Restauración Política de España* by Sancho de Moncada (1619) and *Conservación de Monarquías* by Pedro Fernández de Navarrete (1621).<sup>10</sup> How do these texts reflect on the essence of Spain and the Spaniards during this peaceful, but ideologically challenging period? What image of the nation do these writers project, and how do they link their discourse to the critical international perception of Spain? In order to answer these questions I will dwell not on the projection of a positive auto-image that had been linked to the Spaniards and their territory since time immemorial according to the tradition of the *laus Hispaniae*, or on the idea of being an elected nation, an aspect that is regularly stressed in the sources of the time.<sup>11</sup> I will instead focus on another element that is equally essential for the self-definition of the Spanish nation, but that has not received much attention within this context of national definition: the vivid notion of being hated by other nations. This line of argumentation blends with one of the most pervasive and persistent Western narratives regarding the enemy: 'The Black Legend of Spanish Cruelty'. This legend depicted the Spaniards as thirsty for gold, lecherous, lazy, treacherous and

cruel. Moreover, their barbaric character reflected their impure blood, an unholy mixture of Moor and Jew.<sup>12</sup> The debate on the existence – or non-existence – of a Spanish Black Legend is nowadays the topic of much national and international academic research and of wide public interest in Spain.<sup>13</sup> Did such a negative and orchestrated image of the Spaniards really ever exist? Is this narrative not an ongoing sequel to the right-wing Franquist search for and exaltation of a glorious Spanish Golden Age, with echoes of a conspiracy theory? The discourses on Spanish national identity and the Black Legend coincide here. This idea of being hated and despised by the world also contributed to the development of a Spanish identity and activated a strongly apologetic strand of thought in authors of the time. Although the idea that the Spaniards did not react to foreign criticism has been long advocated, we know now that this was not the case, as many an example can demonstrate.<sup>14</sup> Let's think for instance of Pedro de Cornejo's 1581 war chronicle on the Netherlands. Moved by all those foreign, vilifying and incorrect accounts about the Spaniards, he felt compelled to write his own – and, as he saw it, truthful – account of the events. Cornejo even wrote that same year an *Anti-Apology*, responding to William of Orange's famous pamphlet *Apologie* (1580) that, since Julián Juderías, has been considered one of the pillars of the Spanish Black Legend.<sup>15</sup>

### The Early Years of the Truce

One of the most famous Spanish apologies of early modern time was written by Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, a brilliant and critical observer of his era and canonical figure of the Spanish Golden Age. His *laus Hispaniae* titled *España defendida* was probably written between 1609 and 1611-12, but was never completed. In his text, as 'hijo de España' (son of Spain), he decides to praise the glories of Spain. He is tired of witnessing its suffering, and in his dedication to King Philip III, he explains his urge to rebut all those foreign lies and falsehoods. His patriotic fury is roused by the criticism of humanists of the time like Joseph Justus Scaliger, Gerard Mercator and Marc-Antoine Muret, who had attacked Hispano-Roman authors like Quintilian, Lucan and Seneca as well as the Spanish language. *En passant* he also refers to Erasmus, whom he considers 'carried away by his foreign passion',<sup>16</sup> suggesting with these words that his perception of Spain is tainted by a wide – and negative – European vision. Think of Erasmus' famous words: 'Non placet Hispania'. Quevedo complains that the Spanish patience with foreign criticism is seen as pride, and that 'our enemies attack furiously

our principles', concluding that 'in the end, all nations look down on Spain'.<sup>17</sup> With this criticism as incentive, he embarks on his apologetic enterprise.

What is important is that Quevedo in his *laus* dwells not only on the positive virtues of the Spaniards, like their ancient warlike vigour, one of the most characteristic national traits, but that he addresses and criticises the vices of his contemporary countrymen. The old exemplary Spanish *sobriedad* (temperance) has disappeared, and the Spaniards have become decadent and effeminate. If Spain is to recover, the nation has to mend its ways and return to the good habits and virtues of its ancestors. In the context of the shameful signing of the truce from the Spanish perspective, it is relevant to point out that Quevedo's message is clearly warlike: Spain has temporarily put down its weapons, but it will return to war with renewed energy and power.<sup>18</sup> He believes, therefore, that the Spanish warlike vigour will come to life again. Foreign criticism and disdain seem to activate the urge to revise the national essence of Spain and the attempt to strengthen it.

The great playwright Félix Lope de Vega, a friend of Quevedo's and a well-known defender of the cause of the Spanish monarchy, published in 1609 his epic poem *La Jerusalén Conquistada*, following Torquato Tasso's famous model *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581). The work was republished seven times during his life.<sup>19</sup> The plot deals with the Third Crusade in the twelfth century. Lope is so free as to apocryphally introduce Spaniards fighting against the infidels. In this way he creates a 'nationalistic revision' of Tasso's text.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the censor who had the function to approve the contents of works before publication praises Lope for his choice of subject: with his *epos* he has demonstrated that the Spaniards had also fought in the Holy Land. Their heroic deeds had been erased from books and other sources, probably because of envy rather than through sheer oblivion.<sup>21</sup> Nowadays we would say that Lope was actually 'reinventing' the Spanish past. In his prologue to the count of Saldaña, Lope explicitly states that he has written his work 'with the intention to serve my *patria*, which is always so offended by foreign historians'.<sup>22</sup> Lope was therefore another author who was very well aware of the criticism of Spain and its reputation abroad and reacted to it. Already in his plays about the war of the Low Countries, composed at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, he presented on stage Flemish characters who voice their deep hatred towards the Spaniards:

Are we *flamencos* or slaves? ... The Spaniards are returning, with all their plundering, wolves after our blood, melting-pots of our silver. Once again we suffer their arrogance ... Does Philip finally resolve to make us submit

to the yoke again? Is the executioner returning? Is his sword returning?  
 Brother, if you are my brother, no more obedience to the king.<sup>23</sup>

In *La Jerusalén* Lope also shows his knowledge of foreign criticism, not only by mentioning it in the prologue, but by integrating into the poem elements that related to the bad reputation of the Spaniards and contesting them. As Antonio Sánchez Jiménez has shown, Lope allows the enemies of the Spaniards to voice their criticism: Spaniards are terribly arrogant. But this negative trait – inaccurate in Spanish eyes – is refashioned by Lope's presenting them not as arrogant but as extremely brave and courageous.<sup>24</sup> A negative perception is disputed and subsequently shown to be a virtue.

However, in the context of the truce, Lope's position differs somewhat from that of Quevedo. Unlike the latter, Lope favours Philip III's irenic policy of *Pax Hispanica*, which was established with the ceasefire, and his rhetorical strategy to burnish Spain's national image is different as well. Epic poems are not the most obvious channel through which to attack national decadence or degeneration. Lope continues to take a laudatory path in his work and links celebrated deeds of the Third Crusade to the glorious times that the Spaniards are enjoying in the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> The famous bellicosity of the Spaniards is not questioned by Lope. Their essence remains untarnished. The fact that two different positions could be found around the same time (Quevedo's belicist 'call to arms' and Lope's more irenic option) reveals the ambivalence in the Spanish discourse around the truce negotiations. The same holds for the Dutch context.<sup>26</sup> After the resumption of the war in 1621, Lope would continue voicing his indignation over the way foreign chroniclers and historians wrote about international current affairs involving the Spaniards. In his celebratory play *The restitution of Brasil* (1625) he would even transfer the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty onto the Dutch, presenting them as cruel and greedy oppressors of the Indian population in America.<sup>27</sup> In one of his poems of 1624 he expresses his indignation over the inaccurate information about Spain, all motivated by 'lack of objectivity, jealousy and greed'.<sup>28</sup>

In the political climate of the truce it is not surprising that the poet and 'auditor de ejército' Christobal Suárez de Figueroa, known for his bad temper and sharp tongue and pen, published an epic poem in 1612 (again in Tasso's fashion) originally titled *La España Defendida*. The preoccupation and urge to defend Spain was clearly in the air. In their preliminary 'aprobación', the censors of the manuscript, Lope de Vega among them (though they were not good friends), praised Figueroa's work, especially the fact that the topic was in 'honra de nuestra nación', for the honour (defence, we could

say) of our nation.<sup>29</sup> Figueroa's epic poem describes the victory of Bernardo del Carpio over the French invader Roland, nephew of Charlemagne at Roncesvaux in 808. Bernardo del Carpio's victory is considered as one of the foundational myths of Spain, and the hero enjoyed great popularity in the early modern times. Nowadays his existence is disputed and remains a source of heated debate. The role of myths in shaping a proto-national identity and exalting a Spanish nation in this period has been studied in recent years.<sup>30</sup> Bernardo del Carpio embodies in this poem the virtues of the ideal Spaniard who victoriously overpowers the external aggressor. Figueroa employs strategical rethoric comparable to that of Lope: the Spaniards of the time can seek their reflection in this glorious example of a national past that binds them together.

### The Last Years of the Truce

But what happened when the truce was coming to a close? Which ideas do we find in the Spanish discourse that define Spanish national identity? Was the feeling of being internationally despised somehow tempered, and was the Spanish national self-image freed from those negative traits that implied decadence? The two selected reformist authors for this period, Sancho de Moncada and Pedro Fernández de Navarrete, strongly reflect the contemporary political preoccupations in Spain. Moreover, they position themselves in a historiographical tradition that finds its roots in the canonical *Historia de España* (1601) by the Jesuit Juan de Mariana.<sup>31</sup> Mariana's Spanish translation of his original Latin version is considered a historiographical milestone since it made history accessible to wider swaths of the population, contributing in this way to the forging of a Spanish collective identity.<sup>32</sup> In his introduction to his history, Mariana refers to being motivated in the composition of his work by foreigners' general hatred of Spain. At the same time, he does not mince his words when he implies that Spain is hated due to the severity and arrogance of some of its administrators.<sup>33</sup> His nuanced remarks sparked the criticism of his contemporaries, who accused him of lack of patriotism and of an uncritical tone towards other nations.<sup>34</sup>

Sancho de Moncada's *Restauración Política de España* was published in 1619 and Pedro Fernández de Navarrete's *Conservación de Monarquías* in 1621. At the beginning of 1619, Philip III had issued his *Consulta* in which he asked for suggestions to improve Spain's economic situation. Many writers responded to his request. Sancho de Moncada was a priest and philosopher from Toledo who would have considerable influence on future Spanish

economists. His ideas would be described nowadays as protectionist and mercantilist. He wrote about the depopulation of Spain as well as about prices and deficient agricultural techniques.<sup>35</sup> According to him, the importation of foreign goods should be forbidden. Relevant for us is his first discourse on the 'firm and stable richness of Spain' where he states that although many people assume that Spain's greatness is eternal, Spain is at great risk.<sup>36</sup> The causes of this situation are manifold. He refers to the great changes that Spain has experienced over the last five or six years and stresses 'the general hatred of all nations against the Spanish one, whereas it lacks all means for its defence, like people, money, weapons and horses ..., and the people are so pampered and effeminate'.<sup>37</sup> Moncada mentions here two aspects that seem definitive for the Spanish nation: they are hated and their customs have so degenerated that masculinity – and bellicosity one would say – are gone. Juan de Mariana had also referred to the decadence of Spanish customs as had Quevedo.

Another arbitrista or reformist author follows this same line of thought: Pedro Fernández de Navarrete, secretary and chaplain to the king. In his *Conservación de monarquías* Navarrete pays a great deal of attention to the decadence of Spanish customs as criticised by Quevedo. In his 400-page tract he analyses the problems of Spain and suggests various options to solve them. His pen is moved by his wish to protect his *patria*.<sup>38</sup> He does not mince words in his introduction to the king: he is worried about 'nuestra España', about 'our own Spain, which took us so many centuries to be restored from the Moors, and it is impossible to preserve it if we do not employ the same means we employed to regain it, which are completely opposed to the ones we use nowadays'.<sup>39</sup> Following the traditional description of Spain and its riches and fertility corresponding to the genre of the *laus Hispaniae*, he praises the 'extremely courageous soldiers, very experienced captains, eloquent speakers and illustrious poets of Spain'. The Spanish nation is so inclined to wage war that they favour it above rest and peace, as Latin authors had already mentioned.<sup>40</sup> Although he does not explicitly refer to the hatred felt by foreign nations towards Spain, his defence of the glories of the Spaniards and their old nation reflects the apologetic discourse of his contemporaries.

According to Navarrete, the main problem and disease of these territories is the current lack of temperance (*templanza*) and moderation, which was characteristic of the Spaniards in the past. Spain has become sick with excesses and disorders, especially in clothing, which feminises the Spaniards and weakens their military courage.<sup>41</sup> He refers to all those exaggerated ruffled collars (ruffs) that everybody wears, which are in fact



not Spanish at all. Have they ever seen a portrait of their grandparents with such an impertinent thing?<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the material for these collars comes from abroad, which is also part of the problem, since the country is flooded with all sorts of worthless and futile objects and products that weaken the nation. The enemies of Spain know perfectly well how to debilitate Spain through the commerce of luxurious and pleasurable, but completely superfluous, goods.<sup>43</sup> We could state that, according to Navarrete, foreign nations have deployed a subtle, undermining war technique undetected by Spain, which had fallen into lethargy.

With respect to Dutch-Spanish relations, it is interesting to note that on several occasions Navarrete refers to the Dutch as an example to follow. When referring to the exaggeration and decadence embodied by figures like King Antioco, who went to war as if he were going to a banquet, with cooks, pastry-makers, actors and a vast supply of kitchen utensils, he praises Dutch restraint. He speaks from his own experience. Whilst checking on Dutch vessels during ship embargos, he sees that the only food to be found is a meagre amount of black cake (probably Dutch *koek*), beer and lard, but there is a large supply of bullets, gunpowder and other munitions. Further on in his text he refers again to the Dutch as an example: 'Nobody can blame me if I recommend to the Spaniards the same as, according to Tacitus, a Dutchman recommended to his people'.<sup>44</sup> So we see here a Spaniard agreeing with the Batavian myth by identifying the Batavians with the inhabitants of the Dutch Republic. The Dutchman said: 'Come back to the modest and austere clothes of your parents and grandparents, come back to the old temperance of your provinces, forget all effeminating objects, with which your enemies fight you with more power than with weapons'.<sup>45</sup> Navarrete further applies this message to his own national context: 'Do not forget that the Spanish nation was always more praised than any other because of its capacity to endure the perils of war, hunger, nudity, cold and hot weather. And their temperance has been praised by the writers of antiquity'.<sup>46</sup> His admiration for certain characteristics of the Dutch does not imply that he envisages a future peace: 'The internal peace that Spain enjoys is due to the continuous wars in the Netherlands, since they are only defensive and entail tranquility within Spain'.<sup>47</sup>

The bottom line for all these authors writing during the truce is that despite their criticism of contemporary Spanish habits, they believe in the strength of the original and unique virtues of the Spaniards. Although hated by foreign nations, and subtly undermined in their own territories through their surreptitious and degenerating commercial activities, they will be capable of regenerating themselves. We see how in the early modern time the

critical and apologetic narratives of Spain and its national identity go hand in hand. These two narratives, sometimes opposed, sometimes intertwined, will develop over time into a constant line of thought in Spanish discourse: the reflection on the essence of Spain and its decadence and problems. The eighteenth-century *novatores*, the harbingers of the Spanish Enlightenment, will extensively dwell on these topics, but the deepest preoccupation with the so-called 'el problema de España' and Spain's position in the world will come to a peak at the end of the nineteenth century with the loss of the last overseas colonies of the Spanish Empire. Julián Juderías, as a child of his time, will write his canonical work on the Black Legend in this historical period of deep national crisis.<sup>48</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

In conclusion: an intrinsic part of the definition of the Spanish nation in the early modern period was clearly influenced by the need to defend its reputation since it was supposedly hated by many nations. In Spanish eyes, the tarnished image of Spain had to be repaired. Contesting the Black Legend was important not only for the external image of Spain, to show foreign enemies that they were wrong, but also for the nation's self-image and for the construction of a common national entity. According to some critics, the Black Legend still plays a role in contemporary Spanish national images. They speak of an interiorisation process of the Black Legend by which the Spaniards up to the present day continue to feel uncertain about their international reputation.<sup>49</sup> This preoccupation with external perceptions is currently seen in official initiatives such as 'Marca España' or the think tank 'Instituto Elcano', which study the perception of Spain abroad:

Marca España is a State policy whose effects are to be seen in the long term. It is aimed at strengthening our country's image, both among Spanish citizens and beyond Spanish borders ... for the planning, promotion and coordinated management of the activities by public and private agencies aimed at building a stronger image for Spain.<sup>50</sup>

One of their main objectives is to study and analyse the perceptions of Spain around the world and how they have evolved over the years. I am not aware of any similar initiatives in other countries. In the Spanish case, it is remarkable that this idea of not being liked because of certain episodes of the country's national history is still part of the current Spanish national

culture. The German example comes also to mind in our contemporary context as a nation marked by the events of World War II. I also wonder whether the notion of being hated by other nations has influenced other national discourses during the early modern period in the same way. For the Spanish at least, defining the nation and defending the nation were two closely interrelated narratives, in the early modern period as well as nowadays.

## Notes

1. The renowned Spanish historian Ricardo García Cárcel has studied how the term 'nación española' has been used beginning in the sixteenth century. Ricardo García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra. Historia y opinión* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992), 124.
2. Xosé M. Nuñez Seixas, *Patriotas y demócratas. El discurso nacionalista español después de Franco* (Madrid: Catarata, 2010).
3. John Elliott, 'La época de la inocencia ha terminado', *El País* (8 November 2001), 41.
4. José Antonio Maravall, *Teatro y sociedad en la sociedad barroca* (Madrid: Seminarios y Ediciones, 1972), 36; José Antonio Maravall, *La cultura del Barroco. Análisis de una estructura histórica* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1975), 115.
5. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé M. Nuñez Seixas (eds.), *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX* (Barcelona: RBA, 2013).
6. Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes* (Bern/Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), see for instance 85-8.
7. Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation. Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Verónica Ryjik, *Lope de Vega en la invención de España. El drama histórico y la formación de la conciencia nacional* (London: Tamesis, 2011).
8. Joep Leerssen, 'Over nationale identiteit', *Theoretische geschiedenis*, 4(1988), 417-30.
9. The dedication is dated 1609, the composition of the text probably took place between 1609 and 1611-12. Francisco de Quevedo, *España defendida de los tiempos de ahora de las calumnias de los noveleros y sediciosos*, ed. Victoriano Roncero López (Pamplona: Eunsá, 2013), 62. The translation of the title is: 'Spain defended from current times and of the lies of sedicious and inventionist people'. Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio, *Jerusalén Conquistada, epopeya trágica* (Madrid: Juan de la Cuesta, 1609).
10. Sancho de Moncada, *Restauración Política de España*, ed. Jean Vilar (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 1974); Pedro Fernández de Navarrete, *Conservación de monarquías y discursos políticos* [Barcelona 1621/ Madrid 1626], ed. Michael D. Gordon (Madrid, 1982); Evaristo Correa Calderón,

- Registro de arbitritas, economistas y reformadores españoles. Catálogo de impresos y manuscritos* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981).
11. See the study of Mateo Ballester Rodríguez, *La identidad española en la Edad Moderna (1556-1665). Discursos, símbolos y mitos* (Madrid: Tecnos 2010), 227, 296.
  12. Koen W. Swart, 'The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War', in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands, vol. V. Some political mythologies* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 36-57; William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England. The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham: Duke UP, 1971).
  13. Attention is also being paid to the implications of the legend in contemporary Spain, as in Jesús Villanueva, *Leyenda negra. Una polémica nacionalista en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Catarata, 2011), or Ricardo García Cárcel, 'Reflexiones sobre la leyenda negra', in J.J. Ruiz Ibáñez (ed.), *Las vecindades de las Monarquías Ibéricas* (Madrid: FCE, 2013), 43-80. For an overview of the latest developments in this field, see Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, 'La Leyenda Negra: para un estado de la cuestión', in Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, Antonio Sánchez Jiménez and Harm den Boer (eds.), *España ante sus críticos: las claves de la Leyenda Negra* (Frankfurt/Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2015), 23-44.
  14. For instance, the Spanish Monarchy was always fully aware of the anti-Spanish propaganda in the Netherlands and reacted to it. See Monica Stensland, *Habsburg Communication in the Dutch Revolt* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012) and Rodríguez Pérez, Sánchez Jiménez and Den Boer (eds.), *España ante sus críticos*. As the seventeenth century progresses, more historians will include this apologetic discourse in their national histories, such as Fray Jerónimo de San José (*Genio de la Historia*, 1651), Antonio de Solís (*Historia de la Conquista de México*, 1684), Nicolás Antonio (*Censura de historias fabulosas*, 1652?). I want to thank Cesc Esteve for the references to these authors (see also his contribution in this volume).
  15. Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, "'Un laberinto más engañoso que el de Creta": Leyenda negra y memoria en la *Antiapología* de Pedro Cornejo (1581) contra Guillermo de Orange', in Rodríguez Pérez, Sánchez Jiménez and Den Boer (eds.), *España ante sus críticos*; Julián Juderías, *La leyenda negra* (Madrid: Atlas, 2007), 139-162, 220.
  16. Quevedo, *España defendida*, 162.
  17. Ibid., 179: 'Soberbios en nuestra paciencia los enemigos nuestros, insultan (acometen violentamente para hacer daño) nuestros principios ... al final todas las naciones miran debajo a España'.
  18. Ibid., 172: 'España nunca goza de paz, solo descansa, como aora, del peso de las armas para tornar a ellas con mas fuerza i nuevo aliento'.
  19. Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, 'La apreciación de la obra de Lope de Vega entre *La fama póstuma* (1636) y el *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1726-1737)', *Anuario Lope de Vega. Texto, literatura, cultura*, XVII (2011), 123-49, at 126.

20. Elizabeth B. Davis, 'El destino de Ismenia. Jerusalén Conquistada de Lope de Vega', *Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, Actas XI* (1992), 66-73, at 66.
21. Lope de Vega, *Jerusalén Conquistada*, aprobación Padre Paravicino: 'por la noticia que descubre de nuestros españoles conquistadores del sepulcro de Christo nuestro Señor, cuyas hazañas mas envidiadas que olvidadas de escritores tenían borradas de libros y memorias'.
22. Ibid., prólogo al Conde de Saldaña: 'Yo le he escrito con ánimo de servir a mi patria tan ofendida siempre de los historiadores extranjeros'.
23. Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes*, 110.
24. Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, 'Quevedo y Lope (poesía y teatro) en 1609: patriotismo y construcción nacional en *La España Defendida* y *la Jersusalem Conquistada*', *La Perinola* 17 (2013), 27-56, at 45, 53.
25. Ibid., 40.
26. Alberto Mariano Rodríguez Martínez, 'Entre la conveniencia y la reputación: una aproximación a las opiniones generadas por la firma de la tregua de los Doce Años', *Chronica Nova*, 39 (2013), 291-320; Jasper van der Steen, 'A contested past: Memory Wars during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621)', in Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller and Jasper van der Steen (eds.), *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 45-62.
27. Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes*, 226-9.
28. 'Tan atropellada la justicia/por los historiadores extranjeros, por pasión, por envidia y por codicia'. Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, 'De mentiras, ficciones, oprobios y falsedades: reacción hispánica a la leyenda negra en el siglo XVI y XVII', in David Sánchez Cano and Michael Scholz-Hänsel (eds.), *Spanische Kunst von El Greco bis Dalí. Ambiguitäten statt Stereotypen (Arte español desde El Greco hasta Dalí. Ambigüedades en vez de estereotipos)* (Berlin: Frank und Timme, 2015), 23-46, at 38.
29. Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa, *España defendida. Poema Heroyco* [1612], ed. Enrique Suárez Figaredo, 2006, 21, 25. Censor Alonso Remón: 'El cual está tan ingeniosa, y eruditamente escrito, tan levantado el verso, la materia tan suave, y la ocasión del sujeto, tan en honra de nuestra Nación' and Lope de Vega: 'Es lección agradable, en estilo grandemente favorecido de la naturaleza, y del arte. Muestra erudición copiosa, en asunto tan feliz como es la honra de nuestra Nación.' [consulted 18 March 2015; [http://users.ipfw.edu/jehle/CERVANTE/othertexts/Suarez\\_Figaredo\\_EspanaDefendida.pdf](http://users.ipfw.edu/jehle/CERVANTE/othertexts/Suarez_Figaredo_EspanaDefendida.pdf)].
30. Elizabeth B. Davies, *Myth and Identity in the Epic of Imperial Spain* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000).
31. Mariana published his *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* in 1592, followed by a translation in Spanish in 1601.
32. Ballester Rodríguez, *La identidad española en la Edad Moderna*, 190.
33. Juan de Mariana, 'Historia general de España', in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Madrid: BAE, 1854), vol. 31, 1-7.

34. Rodríguez Ballaster, *La identidad española en la Edad Moderna*, 220-1. See, for example, *Antirespuesta a lo que escribió Ian de Mariana contra las Aduertencias q salieron a su Historia* (Toledo, 1608), s.i. [Biblioteca Nacional Madrid, VE/34-22].
35. Rogelio Fernández Delgado, 'La ruptura del pensamiento económico castellano en el siglo XVII: Juan de Mariana y Sancho de Moncada' (PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Madrid 2003).
36. 'A muchos parece eterna la Monarquía de España por su grandeza. Pero mucho se habla de su peligro en todas partes, y estos días se ha advertido a V. Majestad en varios libros y memoriales'.
37. Moncada, *Restauración*, discurso primero, capítulo II: 'España corre riesgo' (Spain is at risk); 'Ver el general odio de todas las naciones con la Española, y en ella faltando cada hora las causas de su defensa, gente, dineros, armas, caballos (que ya son todos de carretería) y la gente toda tan regalada y efeminada. Y por estos principios se saben ruinas de otros Reinos y la pérdida de España'. [consulted 20 March 2015]: [www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/restauracion-politica-de-espana--o/html/fee991a2-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064\\_3.htm](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/restauracion-politica-de-espana--o/html/fee991a2-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_3.htm).
38. Fernández de Navarrete, *Conservación*, 356: 'Movida del zelo del bien de mi patria'.
39. Ibid., 32: 'Nuestra propia España, que tantos siglos ha durado el restaurarla de los Moros y es imposible conservarla si no es por los mismos medios con que se ganó, que son del todo opuestos a los que hoy usamos'.
40. Ibid., 190.
41. Ibid., 274, 305, 310.
42. Ibid., 306.
43. Ibid., 312, 362. Navarrete is surprised that the Spaniards are so mesmerised by all these superfluous objects, since they would not be wanted by the most barbaric nations in Ethiopia.
44. Ibid., 312.
45. Ibid., 313: 'Nadie me culpe si recetaré a los Españoles lo que en semejante ocasión receté en Tácito un Olandés a sus naturales, diciéndoles: "Volved, volved al modesto y templado trage de vuestros padres y abuelos; volved a la antigua templanza de vuestras provincias; dexad los afeminados deleytes, con que vuestros enemigos os hacen más fuerte guerras que con las armas ..."'
46. Ibid., 313: 'Advertid que la nación española fue siempre alabada de que mas que otra alguna sabia sufrir los trabajos de la guerra, el hambre, la desnudez, los fríos y los calores; siendo encarecida su templanza de todos los autores antiguos'.
47. Ibid., 165: 'Que la paz interna de que goza España, se origina de las continuas guerras de Flandes, que siendo solo defensivas acarrean la quietud de estos reynos'.

48. Luis Español Bouche, *Leyendas negras. Vida y obra de Julián Juderías* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 2007); José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001).
49. Carmen Iglesias, *No siempre lo peor es cierto. Estudios sobre la historia de España* (Madrid: Galaxia/Gutenberg, 2008), 23.
50. [www.marcaespana.es/](http://www.marcaespana.es/) and [www.realinstitutoelcano.org/](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/)

## 10 Negative Mirror Images in Anglo-Dutch Relations, 1650-1674

*Gijs Rommelse*

In 1652, shortly after the outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-54), a Dutch author, calling himself 'a free Hollander', published an anti-English pamphlet, the Dutch title of which could be translated as 'English Alarm, or signs of war detected in her unfaithful and godless actions against the regents and subjects of the seven free United Provinces'. The patriotic pamphleteer characterised the leaders of the English Commonwealth as 'presumptuous devils who believe everyone should dance to their tune'. The aggression of the 'godless tailed men' against the Dutch Republic was motivated by jealous greed, he claimed, while the execution of King Charles I in 1649 by Parliament had been 'disgraceful', 'tyrannical' and a 'regicide'. England could not bear comparison with the United Provinces, which had always, until the premature death of stadholder William II in 1650, been governed by a lord and provincial Estates in joint sovereignty and had never, in recent times, deposed a lawful sovereign, as the English Commonwealth had now done. Thus, comparisons between the two states did not hold water.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the obvious fact of the Dutch authors' desire to convince their compatriots that the Commonwealth's grounds for war, and its political and economic intentions, were unjust and immoral, the pamphlet illustrates how authors created negative mirror-images of their enemy's nations, states and identities.<sup>2</sup> This means that these authors attributed negative character traits – cultural, political, religious or other – that were the exact opposites of those comprising their own self-image to another nation or state. In this way, they contributed towards a reinterpretation or stereotyping of 'the other', while simultaneously redefining or strengthening their own nation's or state's identity, implicitly and sometimes also explicitly. This article intends to analyse the political and cultural contexts of the negative mirror images created of the English by Dutch authors during the three seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch Wars, and their function, intentional or unintentional, as tools of Dutch identity construction.



## Mutual Image Formation

Fought in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the three Anglo-Dutch Wars were essentially the result of a reverse in the balance of power between the two states. During the first decades of their revolt against the Spanish Habsburgs, the Dutch provinces had sought and received help from England. From the early 1600s onward, however, spectacular economic growth had helped transform the Republic into a strong, viable state. This development resulted, in 1648, in formal international recognition of its independence. England, by contrast, was during this period fading into the periphery of international politics. During the sixteenth century, the country had played a prominent part as a champion of international Protestantism, but the first half of the seventeenth century witnessed political and economic decline. Partly as a consequence, the once weak and insecure Dutch Republic metamorphosed from a subservient client into an economic and naval rival, one that felt confident to ignore or oppose English political or mercantilist demands as its interests required. English rulers and politicians had great difficulty in coming to terms with this new reality; they continued to perceive the United Provinces as a client and themselves as the arbiter, when necessary, in Dutch affairs. These incompatible self-perceptions, and the two nations' diametrically opposed material interests, caused relations to become strained.<sup>3</sup>

Public opinion played a significant part in the political and ideological contexts of the three wars. Courtiers, politicians, merchants and military men could be expected to concern themselves with the threat, outbreak, conduct, continuation or ending of the wars. Interest groups – political, economic, religious and other – made sure their opinions were represented in the public sphere by means of pamphlets, poems, plays, printed petitions or visual media. Both the English and the Dutch governments sought to create public support for their policies in order to consolidate or strengthen their powerbase and to facilitate the collection or maximise the yield of the taxes required to fund the war effort. Governments, in order to influence attitudes towards the outbreak or conduct of the wars, and the subsequent conclusion of peace treaties, manipulated public opinion by censorship of printed media. They rewarded authors and publishers who gave voice to the official interpretation. The interaction of contesting opinions in the public sphere gave rise to and fed political ideologies.<sup>4</sup>

In his study of the contexts of the Anglo-Dutch wars, from the English perspective, Steven Pincus departed radically from the traditional view by

proposing that these struggles were ideological rather than economic in origin. The first war, he argued, arose because the Commonwealth considered the Dutch to have forsaken the worship of God for that of Mammon, and it believed that their Orangist sympathies made them a danger to the English republic. Dutch aspirations, fired by their commercial primacy, to 'universal monarchy' in succession to their former Habsburg masters made them untrustworthy and deceitful. Their Protestantism was perceived as little more than crypto-Catholicism. The second and third conflicts, in Pincus's view, erupted because Anglican Royalists saw the Dutch republican regime of John de Witt as a threat to the recently restored Stuart monarchy. Tony Claydon elaborated on Pincus's interpretation but concluded that the anti-Dutch polemic expressed in 'banal pamphlet rhetoric' and 'Court propaganda' did not add up to a coherent ideology. In his view, the religiously inspired English propaganda campaign inculcated a widespread revulsion against the Dutch. This formed the true cause of the second and third wars and inspired the English military effort. This religious sentiment was unleashed by competition over material interests and fierce patriotism, which was sparked by the Dutch refusal to acknowledge English maritime sovereignty.<sup>5</sup>

Pincus, Claydon, Dunthorne and other historians scrutinised anti-Dutch rhetoric, in literary sources, in their demonstration of the creation, by contemporary authors, of negative mirror images, both implicitly and explicitly. In their analyses, the Dutch ('lusty, fat, two-legged cheese-worms') were without any sense of honour or honesty. They were treacherous, cowardly and tight-fisted, and ungrateful for the military help they had received from England in the past. They represented a 'religious and political antitype', in contrast to which the English nation was honourable, courageous, pious and honest.<sup>6</sup> The wars were inspired by genuine patriotism and undertaken in order to undo wrongs supposedly committed by the Dutch, as well as to eliminate the political and ideological threat posed by the United Provinces. English national identity was reaffirmed and thereby strengthened by the pamphleteers' perception of English collective self-image, from which they derived the negative mirror image of the Dutch Republic. This comparison was particularly powerful because of the obvious similarities between the two states: the shared Protestant tradition and the dislike of monarchical absolutism, the large maritime economy and the frequent cultural, economic and scientific contacts across the North Sea. It was this great resemblance that led politically motivated authors to pick on, emphasise or construct the differences.

## Dutch National Identity

The extent to which a national identity may be said to have developed in the Dutch Republic, during the Revolt against Habsburg Spain and the century and a half between the peace of Münster and the French invasion of 1795, has given rise to controversy among historians. The now generally accepted view, that it is permissible to speak of a Northern Netherlandish collective identity, was given support by Alastair Duke, who proposed that the 'Black Legend', created during the Revolt, of the 'tyrannical and devilish policies' of Philip II had contributed to the development of a collective identity among the northern provinces.<sup>7</sup> Koen Swart had previously dismissed this anti-Spanish legend as a 'myth', but Simon Schama, in *The Embarrassment of Riches*, stressed the role of shared myth, moral sentiment and self-identity in the coming into being of the nation during the Dutch Golden Age.<sup>8</sup> Patriotism, as it is treated in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has been described by Marijke Meijer Drees, while Peter Rietbergen proposed that public sympathy for the house of Orange functioned as a uniting factor and thereby militated against the decentralisation of the political structure.<sup>9</sup>

The most prominent articulator of the opposite view was Simon Groenveld who, in an influential article, proposed that, in the sixteenth century, terms like 'fatherland', 'nation' and 'patria' were of relevance in local and regional contexts but not, significantly, at the national level.<sup>10</sup> His interpretation stemmed from consideration of the Dutch Republic's origin as a loose confederation of rebelling provinces, the decentralised character of its governmental bodies and institutions, and the frequent political squabbling between the seven provinces. Guido de Bruin examined the use and meaning of the term 'fatherland' in pamphlet literature during the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century to reach conclusions in general agreement with those of Groenveld. He argued that its frequent use in religious polemic, and in the partisan rivalry between Orangists and republicans, contributed to a widespread popular recognition of the validity of patriotism, yet, at the same time, inevitably conferred on the term a certain superficiality. De Bruin called this 'the inner weakness of patriotism'.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years new research, conducted by historians such as Femke Deen, Lotte Jensen, Ingmar Vroomen, Roeland Harms, Jill Stern and Michel Reinders, has deepened our understanding of the influence of printed media, propaganda and public discourses on Dutch political culture and the construction of collective identities.<sup>12</sup> A research project headed by Judith Pollmann has investigated the 'Tales of the Revolt'. She and her colleagues

have convincingly demonstrated how the Dutch Revolt brought forth distinct Northern and Southern Netherlandish identities.<sup>13</sup> Pollmann explained how 'the propagandistic appeal to the love of a common fatherland by the Dutch rebels transformed itself into a concept of Netherlandish nationhood'. Crucial in this Northern Netherlandish identity was the notion of a national struggle against and ultimate liberation from foreign oppression and tyranny.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that this identity was based primarily on representations of the enemy – 'negative mirror images', in other words – and only to a lesser degree on a self-generated image. The question remains whether and to what extent these relative proportions underwent change during the English wars.

### England as a Negative Mirror Image of Dutch Identity

There was little debate among Dutch pamphleteers about the roots of the first war; they almost unanimously concluded that the English Commonwealth was the aggressor and that England's war effort was primarily motivated by a mercantilist desire to forcefully take over Dutch maritime commerce and its ambition to control the seas.<sup>15</sup> The anonymous author of 'Dutch eye-salve', a pamphlet published in 1652, claimed that England 'is trying to rob us of the security of the seas and consequently our commerce, by their stealing and pillaging of our vessels and goods without any justice in the world'.<sup>16</sup> The maker of the 'Fateful allegory of the state of the English and Dutch government' accused the Commonwealth of 'outrageous robbery committed against friends and allies'.<sup>17</sup> The religious and ideological differences adduced as motives by the Commonwealth were rejected by Dutch authors, who considered them merely hollow rhetoric. The second part of the 'English Alarm' pamphlet portrays a Dutch merchant discussing politics with a Member of the Rump Parliament, accusing the Commonwealth of cynically employing religion as a mere cover for barbarism, bloodshed and crime.<sup>18</sup>

The motivations for the second war of 1665-67 were very similar to those behind the first, or so the majority of Dutch pamphleteers claimed. The author of 'Dispute and quarrel, arising from a dialogue between an Englishman, a Hollander, a Zeelander and a captain, concerning our own and the English state', who called himself 'a lover of prosperity', had the Englishman say to the Hollander that 'I come to see if you have any vessels in your seaports that I could take, as the 150 to 200 you have already given me barely wet my mouth, let alone quench my thirst'. The Hollander replied, 'I see that you have

not forgotten your old ways and that you will employ nothing but villainy to obtain your ends'.<sup>19</sup> The author of 'Dutchman and Englishman together discussing the naval battle of 13 June 1665' (the Battle of Lowestoft) had the Dutchman rhetorically ask, 'Does your vengeful nation really believe that we will bow because of your usurpation and violence and because of what you have thievishly taken from us?'<sup>20</sup> In addition to mercantilist and maritime aspirations as motives for English aggression, Dutch pamphleteers also assigned King Charles II a share of the responsibility. They claimed that he had deliberately broken the 1662 Anglo-Dutch friendship treaty and had purposely provoked the deterioration of relations and the subsequent outbreak of war.<sup>21</sup>

The third war, which England began in 1672 in conjunction with France and the bishoprics of Cologne and Münster, was, as recognised by numerous Dutch pamphleteers, essentially a conspiracy by Louis XIV and Charles II to extirpate the United Provinces as a viable, independent state. In addition to the loathing of the two monarchs for the Dutch republican tradition and John de Witt's regent regime, they aimed to undo the United Provinces' dominance in maritime commerce and manufacture. The war and the subsidies provided by Louis to Charles in return for his cooperation were, the pamphleteers explained, intended to provide Charles with sufficient financial resources to become independent of Parliament. The author of 'Perfidiousness of the English' pilloried Charles, warning his readers: 'Behold the benevolence changed into hostility, and the promises and words of such a monarch into treachery and faithlessness, ... because kings only betray and sacrifice subjects for money, and neglect the welfare of their empires'.<sup>22</sup> The writer of 'Many dogs were the hare's death', styling himself 'a lover of the fatherland', compared Charles to 'Nero' and 'Judas, who, through the Devil's counsel, for thirty millions murders us'.<sup>23</sup>

In the period prior to, during, and following the first war, Dutch authors, particularly those who sympathised with the houses of Orange and Stuart, severely criticised Parliament's role in the British Civil Wars and the execution of King Charles I.<sup>24</sup> In the second part of the 'English Alarm', published in 1652, the author stated that 'nobody in his senses would need to ask why we consider Parliament, or rather the council of colonels and soldiers that calls itself a parliament, to be a congregation of tyrants, a council of regicides, a monstrous gang of mutineers'.<sup>25</sup> Other pamphleteers were equally dismissive about the 'regicide'.<sup>26</sup> The anonymous author of the poem 'The devil's tail-hunt', published in 1649, warned his Dutch readership: 'If they betrayed their divinely ordained lord for silver, without a kiss / what the Devil do you think they will do to you?'<sup>27</sup> What this shows us is that Dutch authors purposefully created a sharp distinction between the English



Figure 10.1 Portraying Cromwell as 'the usurper', Dutch artists created a sharp distinction between the English republic, which they labeled as 'godless, treacherous and tyrannical', and the Dutch republican tradition. Anonymous etching, 1653. Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

republic, which they labelled as 'godless, treacherous and tyrannical', and the Dutch republican tradition.<sup>28</sup>

From his rise to power in 1653 and onward, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell came to personify, in Dutch pamphlets, poems and allegorical etchings, all the negative character traits attributed to the English republic. Cromwell's name became synonymous with tyranny, regicide, treachery and godlessness. He was, in Dutch eyes, the archetypical 'tailed man'.<sup>29</sup> Diederik Enklaar succeeded in tracing the origins of this traditional insult for Englishmen to medieval France and Flanders, yet was unable to explain its use in the Northern Netherlands in the early modern age. The exact connotations of the tail also remain obscure; it could as well refer to the Devil or his demons as to the English bulldog or a stinging scorpion. Whatever the case, its meaning was obviously distinctly negative.<sup>30</sup>

Some of the unfavourable character traits attributed to Cromwell were later inherited by Charles II. His restoration in 1660, two years after Cromwell's death, had been welcomed in the United Provinces by Orangists and republicans alike. The first group had hoped that the new monarch would





Figure 10.2 Cromwell as the 'despicable tailed man', 1652. His tail is covered with coins, presumably referring to English mercantilist envy. Assisted by a Frisian, an Irish and the royalist Prince Rupert of the Palatinate, a Hollander and a Zeelander are about to cut off his tail. Anonymous etching, 1652. Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

promote his nephew William III's political interests. William, the son of the late William II and Charles's sister Mary, had been effectively sidetracked by the regent regime. The second group, which included the current regime, had hoped the new king would favour Dutch-English rapprochement, or even friendship and a defensive alliance. Despite the conclusion of the earlier mentioned treaty in 1662, mutual relations had soon begun to deteriorate, however. Struggling with massive debts and insufficient revenue, while feeling the urgent need to strengthen his domestic power base, Charles had chosen to support the aggressive anti-Dutch policies of mercantile and naval interest groups at court, in Parliament and in the City of London. War was declared in early 1665, although the hunt for Dutch merchant and fishing vessels had commenced several months earlier.<sup>31</sup> In the eyes of many Dutch pamphleteers, Charles's barely hidden support for the war made him a treacherous oath breaker and a tyrant. He was not depicted with a tail, however, as Cromwell had been; this *lèse-majesté* against a foreign monarch was perhaps a bridge too far. Instead, the authors attached the tail to the English nation as a whole, stressing its perfidious, aggressive, jealous and thievish character.<sup>32</sup> The third war, as has already



Figure 10.3 English dogs barking to the Dutch lion while a Dutch sailor is about to clip off their tails with red-hot pliers. Cromwell uses a stick to wake the Dutch lion. Etching by Crispijn van de Passe, 1652. Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

been noted, strengthened the image of Charles, promulgated in Dutch pamphlet literature, as a treacherous opportunist and indifferent tyrant who aimed to imitate his cousin Louis XIV's absolutist style of government.

Thus, by attributing distinctly negative character traits to the English enemy, Dutch authors and artists implicitly created positive images of the Dutch nation, thereby reaffirming their own national identity. The strength of these images lay partly in the cultural, religious and economic similarities between the two states. As has been remarked previously, it is possible that the many close resemblances between the neighbours separated by the North Sea provoked pamphleteers to focus on differences and see them as flaws.

### **The Dutch Self-Image and Englishness in Dutch Domestic Politics**

The images of Englishness produced by Dutch authors and artists were, to a significant extent, shaped by their perceptions of the Dutch collective



identity. As I mentioned before, the notion of a national struggle against and ultimate liberation from foreign oppression and tyranny had become crucial elements in this identity. The pamphlets studied for this article show that these same elements continued to hold their relevance in the Dutch self-image.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the wars against a new enemy may have even strengthened the idea that the Dutch Republic was based on a struggle against and ultimate victory over tyrannical oppression, or may have provided it a broader applicability.

Several authors refer to the sacrifices made by previous generations during the national struggle against Spain and the military heroism of the Eighty Years' War.<sup>34</sup> In the second part of the 'English Alarm', a staunchly patriotic sailor, in an attempt to stir up anti-English militancy, reminded the readers of 'our ancestors, who fought so bravely for their freedom and have given blood and property for the country'.<sup>35</sup> The author of the 1672 pamphlet 'Righteous weapons of the United Netherlands against the hostile intent and depraved design of the French and English kings' rhetorically asked his readers 'how justified, then, is the resistance put up by the United Netherlands, which have bought their freedom at the expense of much treasure and an abundance of blood of our ancestors?' He invoked the memory of the siege of Leiden of 1573-74, declaring that the starving citizens, when summoned to surrender their city, had said that 'if there were no other option, they would eat their left arm and fight with their right'.<sup>36</sup> The writer of 'Dutch eye-salve' was even more explicit in connecting past and present; he suggested that the English, in their actions against the Republic, 'used the same machine the Spaniards formerly used against us'.<sup>37</sup> It must also be said that various pamphlets tried to do justice to the English military help given to the United Provinces during the early decades of their revolt<sup>38</sup> by gratefully acknowledging this,<sup>39</sup> but the swashbuckling author of the second part of the 'English Alarm' argued that this aid had been motivated purely by self-interest and reminded the readers how English commanders had committed treason by surrendering towns or fortresses to the enemy.<sup>40</sup> By invoking the Spanish Black Legend, in their treatment of images of Englishness, pamphleteers affirmed continuity with the traditions of the Revolt as mentioned earlier.<sup>41</sup>

The images of Englishness produced by Dutch pamphleteers were undoubtedly coloured by their views on Dutch partisan politics. The dynastic ties between the houses of Orange and Stuart, and the shared republicanism of Cromwell's and De Witt's regimes ensured that mutual relations were intertwined with domestic politics in both countries. Cromwell had a direct interest in keeping the young Prince William III sidetracked, and

he demanded that De Witt's regime keep the plotting English royalist exiles in check. Following the Restoration in 1660, the newly crowned monarch aimed to strengthen his own position by interfering in Dutch politics on his nephew William's behalf. The tumultuous relationship with England was thus one of the issues in the partisan rivalry between republicans and Orangists; Dutch authors often published tracts that discussed both matters in mutual context. The 'Serious dialogue between three individuals concerning our affairs and the English', for example, published in 1652, combined a discussion of the current war with England with a fierce attack against the republican regent government.<sup>42</sup> 'The sincere sailor from Holland', a republican pamphlet published in 1666, on the other hand, praised the regent regime for its patriotism and its wise policies, while blaming the Orangist admiral Cornelis Tromp for the Dutch defeat during the St. James's Day Fight.<sup>43</sup> Another Orangist publication, titled 'A fresh sauce over the stale English meat pie dished up in Holland', published in 1672, sharply criticised the monarchs for their joint attack, but claimed that William was not to be blamed: 'Charles may be suspected of forsaking the Lord's salvation for Louis's gold coin, enabling him to threaten us with lead and dart, but how could this affect my Prince? His virtue is our guarantee that he is no traitor'.<sup>44</sup> The intertwined discussions of Anglo-Dutch relations and Dutch partisan politics make it nearly impossible, however, to assess to what extent images of Englishness were coloured by pamphleteers' opinions regarding partisan politics.

It is not easy to be certain regarding the proportions of enemy and self-images, during the period of the wars, compared with the situation during the Revolt. The enemy image seems to have prevailed but for now we must refrain from too dogmatic a conclusion because this would require the study of the primary source material from the periods of the Revolt and the Anglo-Dutch Wars in mutual context. The same goes for the question to what extent public involvement with the wars in general and with the processes of 'selfing' and 'othering' differed during the two periods. It would seem logical, however, to assume that the involvement during the English wars was strongest in the maritime provinces of Zeeland, Holland and Friesland.

One could speculate on the extent to which the Dutch identity, as set forth in pamphlets, was an extrapolation of Holland's identity. Most pamphlets were in fact published in this province, and probably also authored by Hollanders. Some did indeed juxtapose Englishness and Hollandness, implicitly taking the latter as a synonym for Dutchness, like the 'free Hollander' who published the 'English Alarm, or signs of war detected in her unfaithful and

godless actions against the regents and subjects of the seven free United Provinces'.<sup>45</sup> Others, however, like the author of 'Dispute and quarrel, arising from a dialogue between an Englishman, a Hollander, a Zeelander and a captain, concerning our own and the English state', explicitly acknowledged the existence and thus validity of regional identities, while at the same time, by contrasting Dutchness and Englishness, rendered these as components of the larger national identity.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

On the basis of their own national identity which developed during the struggle for independence Dutch pamphleteers created clearly negative mirror images of the English nation, state and identity. These in turn served to reaffirm and thereby reinforce Dutch national identity. It was not, however, the case that a standard, consistent stereotype of Englishness existed in the Dutch Republic. The image underwent change over time, reflecting the developing partisan rivalry between republicans and Orangists, while the death of Cromwell and the restoration of Charles II two years later also represented turning points. Orangists initially looked to Charles as the benefactor who could support their cause and promote the interests of the prince, while Dutch republicans increasingly distrusted his absolutist motives. Thus, the intertwined nature of Anglo-Dutch relations and Dutch partisan rivalry meant that, certainly between 1660 and 1672, there were two contrasting or competing ideas of Englishness present in the Dutch Republic's public sphere.

Moreover, periods of political and diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries had a direct effect on the image of Englishness. Irate pamphlets propagating insulting stereotypes were usually published only at times of deteriorating bilateral relations and during hostilities. Periods of détente saw relations with England relegated to a lower place on the agenda; when it was found necessary to discuss them a much more neutral tone would be employed.<sup>47</sup> There was thus no linear, chronological consistency in the image of Englishness.

Despite these few reservations regarding negative mirror images of Englishness as tools of Dutch identity construction, it is fair to say that the traditional focus on the Dutch Republic's institutional and governmental decentralisation as an impediment for nation formation has become largely obsolete. As was the case in England, Dutch national identity was regularly being reaffirmed by pamphleteers and artists, or redefined in partisan

polemic. This was surely only to be expected in a country with so much political room for public debate, a high literacy rate and such a flourishing printing culture?

## Notes

1. Een vryen hollander, *Engelschen alarm: of oorlogsteyken te bespeuren in haren ontrouwen en goddeloosen handel tegen de regenten en onderdanen van de seven vrye Vereenigde Provincien: wiens billijcke vredens artikulen de Engelsche aan-geboden hier mede te sien zijn. 't Samen-spraak tusschen drie personen, een koopman, een rentenier en een borger over de zake van Engeland* (Amsterdam, 1652). (Knuttel 7212): 'Hoovaardige duyvels, die meenen dat alles na haar pijpen behoort te dansen', and 'Nu sij soo wat bitter bier aan boord hebben en see wat op haar staart geklopt zijn en weten nu niet hoe zij haar Zaak, die van sich selven stinkt, sullen schoon maken'. I would like to thank Judith Pollmann, Roger Downing, Lotte Jensen and Jeroen Bouterse for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this article.
2. See on this subject, for example: Marijke Meijer-Drees, *Andere landen, andere mensen. De beeldvorming van Holland versus Spanje en Engeland omstreeks 1650. Nederlandse cultuur in Europese context* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1997); Idem, 'De beeldvorming Nederland – Spanje voor en na de Vrede van Munster', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 13 (1997), 163-72.
3. Hugh Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt 1560-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 110-32; Anton Poot, *Crucial years in Anglo-Dutch relations (1625-1642). The political and diplomatic contacts* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013); Gijs Rommelse and Roger Downing, 'Anglo-Dutch economic rivalry, 1585-1674: interests, ideas and perceptions', in Moritz Isenmann (ed.), *Merkantilismus? Wiederaufnahme einer Debatte* (Beihefte der Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 228) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 169-95.
4. Joyce Appleby, *Economic thought and ideology in seventeenth-century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Steven Pincus, *Protestantism and patriotism. Ideologies and the making of English foreign policy, 1650-1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Idem, 'Popery, trade and universal monarchy: the ideological context of the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War', *English Historical Review* 107/422 (1992), 1-29; Tony Claydon, *Europe and the making of England 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2007); Gijs Rommelse, 'Mountains of iron and gold: mercantilist ideology in Anglo-Dutch relations (1650-1674)', in David Onnekink and Gijs Rommelse (eds.), *Ideology and foreign policy in early modern Europe, 1650-1750* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 243-66.
5. Pincus, *Protestantism and patriotism*; Idem, 'Popery, trade and universal monarchy'; Claydon, *Europe and the making of England*.

6. Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, 110-23; Charles Wilson, *Profit and Power* (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1957), 126; Jonathan Scott, *England's troubles. Seventeenth-century political instability in European context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 396-400; Idem, "Good night Amsterdam". Sir George Downing and Anglo-Dutch statebuilding', *English Historical Review* 118/476 (2003), 334-56.
7. Alastair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (1) (2004), 10-38
8. K.W. Swart, 'The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War', in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands, vol. V. Some political mythologies* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 36-57; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Collins, 1987), 51-93 and 221-57.
9. Marijke Meijer Drees, 'Patriotisme in de Nederlandse literatuur (ca. 1650-ca. 1750)', *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 88 (1995), 247-60; Peter J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Beeld en zelfbeeld. "Nederlandse identiteit" in politieke structuur en politieke cultuur tijdens de Republiek', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (4) (1992), 635-57.
10. Simon Groenveld, 'Natie en nationaal gevoel in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', in *Scrinium et scriptura. Opstellen betreffende de Nederlandse geschiedenis aangeboden aan J.L. van der Gouw* (Groningen: Van der Kieft, 1980), 372-87.
11. Guido de Bruin, 'Het begrip "vaderland" in de pamfletliteratuur van de Republiek, 1600-1750', in Niek van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 143-61.
12. Femke Deen, *Moorddam. Publiek debat en propaganda in Amsterdam tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand (1566-1578)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015); Lotte Jensen, "'Toen 't volk als uit één' mond, lang leve Oranje! Riep". Orangisme in het vredesjaar 1748', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 128 (2015), 1-22; Michel Reinders, *Printed pandemonium. Popular print and politics in the Netherlands 1650-1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Roeland Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie. Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Ingmar Vroomen, *Taal van de Republiek. Het gebruik van vaderlandsretoriek in Nederlandse pamfletten, 1618-1672* (Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit, 2012); Jill Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic in word and image, 1650-1675* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
13. Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann and Jasper van der Steen (eds.), *Memory before modernity. Practices of memory in early modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Judith Pollmann, 'No Man's Land. Reinventing Netherlandish Identities, 1585-1621', in Robert Stein and Judith Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations. Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden: Brill,

- 2010), 241-61; Marianne Eekhout, 'De kogel in de kerk. Herinneringen aan het beleg van Haarlem, 1573-1630', *Holland. Historisch Tijdschrift* 43 (2) (2011), 108-19; Judith Pollmann, 'Met grootvaders bloed bezegeld. Het religieuze verleden in de zeventiende eeuw', *De zeventiende eeuw. Themanummer Het Vaderlands Verleden in de Zeventiende eeuw* 29 (2) (2013), 154-75; Erika Kuijpers and Judith Pollmann, 'Why remember terror? Memories of violence in the Dutch Revolt', in Jane Ohlmeyer and Micheál Ó Siochru (eds.), *Ireland 1641: Contexts and Reactions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 176-96.
14. Pollmann, 'No Man's land'. See also: Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, 32-3.
  15. Rommelse and Downing, 'Anglo-Dutch economic rivalry', 190.
  16. *Hollands oogh-water, verklarende de oogen der Hollanders ende de loosheyd der Engelsche, by hun ghepleeght in de handelinghe der vredens tractaten tot London. Vervat in seker brief gheschreven aen mijn heer Libertus Amstelius* (n.p., 1652) (Knuttel 7205): 'alsoo de selve ons te trachten afhandich te maken de veyligheydt der Zee ende de aenhangselen van dien, te weten de negotie: als 't blijkt met het steelen en rooven van onse scheepen en goederen sonder eenighe gherechtigheden ter Wereldt'. See also: *Engelschen oorlog. Ontsteken door haar brandende gierigheyd en rooverye ter zee op de onderdanen van de Zeven Vrye Vereenigde Provintien: zijnde een vervolg van den Engelschen alarm. Tweede 't samen-spraak tusschen drie personen, sijnde een koopman, een rentenier en een borger: noopende de zaken van de Engelsche* (Rotterdam: J. van Dalen, 1652) (Knuttel 7246).
  17. *Voorspookkend zinne-beeld, op den staat der Engelsche en Nederlandsche regeering* (Knuttel 7280): 'Of roovery, gants ongehooord gepleegt an vrienden en bont-genooten'.
  18. *Het tweede deel van 't Engelsche alarm of oorlogs-teyken, te bespeuren in haren ontrouwen en goddeloosen handel tegen de regenten en onderdaenen der vereenigde Nederlanden. Vervattende kortelyk de gantsche historie, tussen dese en d'Engelsche voorgevallen* (Middelburg: H. van der Stegen, 1652) (Knuttel 7210).
  19. Een lief-hebber der welstant, *Dispuyt en twist, spruytende door t'samen-spraec, tusschen een Engelsman, Hollander, Zeeuw ende schipper aengaende onsen en den Engelschen staet, waer by gestelt de prophetie eenes students midtsgaders den droom eenes scherp-rechters* (n.p.: n.n., 1665) (Knuttel 9141): 'Ick kom sien of ghy noch schepen in u Havens hebt, om my toe te senden, want met die 150 à 200 die ghy my gegeven hebt, kan ick noch qualick mijn mont nat maken, ick late staen mijn dorst versadigen' and 'Ick sien nu wel dat ghy u oude gangen noch niet vergeten hebt, ende dat ghy u selven niet anders als met boef ende schelm-stucken weet te behelpen'.
  20. *Neerland, en Engelsman t' samen redenkavelende over den zee-strijt den 13 Junii 1665. lest voorgevallen* (n.p.: n.n., 1665) (Knuttel 9069): Meynt ghy

- wrevelige natie dat om sulcx wy voor uw usurpatie ende gewelt sul'en buygen en tot het geene ons schelmachtigh afgerooft'.
21. *Waerachtigh verhael van de grouwelicke en barbarische moorderye, begaen door de Engelschen in Guinea aen onse Nederlandtsche natie, als tot Cabo Cors, Tacograru, Adia en Annemabo, &c. Geschreven aende Ho: Mogende Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenigde Nederl. Provincien* (Middelburg: J. Misson, 1665) (Knuttel 9048); J.v.H. Patriot van 't Vaderlandt, *Trouloosheydt der Engelsche, van eenige jaren herwaerts aangewesen: midtsgaders een klaere aanteeckeninghe op de negotiatie van den heer ambassadeur Downingh, gelijk ookck op d'Engelse declaratie van oorloghe* (n.p.: n.n., 1672) (Knuttel 10020); Willem van Heemskerk, *Innige gedachten geuittet over den brand van Londen* (Leiden: J. van der Brugge, 1666).
  22. Knuttel 10020: 'Sie daer de weldaden verandert in vyantschap, en de beloften en Koninklijke woorden van soo een Monarch, in enckele verradery en trouwloosheydt ... want de Koninkgen verraden en brengen selfs op de vleesch-banck hare Onderdanen om gelt, en verwaerloosen de welvaert alsoo van hare Rijcken'.
  23. Een lief-hebber des vaderlants, *Veel honden was de haes sijn dootd. Gebleecken in het convoyeren vande Spaensche en Smyrnaesse vloot als commandeur van dien; in het t'huys komen verradelijck van de Engelsche koninghs-vloot aengetast op den 23. En 24 Martij 1672* (Middelburg: n.n., 1672) (Knuttel 9977): 'Foey! Bloet-hondt, Nero in u daet, gy stapt in Faroos vuyle schoenen; wegh Judas, die door duyvels raet ons moort om dertigh Millioenen'.
  24. See on Dutch opinions regarding the execution of Charles I: Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, 194; Rommelse and Downing, 'Anglo-Dutch economic rivalry', 182 and 190.
  25. Knuttel 7210: 'niemand die niet sonder reden is, behoeft te vragen waerom wy het Parlement, of liever de Vergadering der kolonellen en soldaten, sich bekleedende met de naem van 't Parlement, voor een concilie houden van geweldenaers, voor een raed van koning-moorders, voor een op-geraept gedrogt van muyte-makers'.
  26. Dutch opinions about the execution of Charles I are analysed in much greater depth in: Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic. Literature, politics and religion in the Anglo-Dutch public sphere, 1639-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015).
  27. Boertig Ernst, *Staerte-jagt van den duyvel. Ontstaen uit den moord van Karel Stuart. Wel-wettigh erf-koningh van Groot Brittannien* (1649) (Knuttel 6331): 'Indien z'hun Heyl'ge Heer, om zilver, zonder zoen verrieden, Duyvel denk, wat zullen z' U dan doen?'.
  28. See, for example, Knuttel 7210.
  29. Rommelse and Downing, 'Anglo-Dutch economic rivalry', 191; Daniël Groshede, *Cromwell naar het oordeel van zijn Nederlandse tijdgenoten* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1951).



30. D.Th. Enklaar, *De gestaarte Engelsman* (Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde) (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1955).
31. Gijs Rommelse, *The Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667). International raison d'état, mercantilism and maritime strife* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006); James Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
32. *Den oprechten Hollandsen bootsgesel. Vertoond in een t'zamenspraak tusschen drie personen. Een van Delft, een van Amsterdam en eenen bootsgesel, geweest zijnde in de laatste zeeslag. Gehoord, gezien en te zamen gesteld, tot onderrechtinge van de vrome en welmeenende patriotten* (Rotterdam: J. Isaakse, 1666) (Knuttel 9333); *Het tweede deel der Hollandse oprechtheid, Tegen der Engelse redenloose onrechtveerdigheid. Bewezen en verhandeld in een t'zamenspraak tusschen een Amsterdammer, een Hagenaar en een Zeeuw. Waar in ook vertoond is der Engelscher trouweloosheid, moorderijen en schrikkelijke tyrannien in Guinea* (Amsterdam: Jan van Dalen, 1665) (Knuttel 9124); Knuttel 9069; Knuttel 9048; Knuttel 9141.
33. See on this: J.A van der Steen, *Memory wars in the Low Countries, 1566-1700* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015).
34. Jasper van der Steen has analysed the memories of the Dutch Revolt expressed in Dutch partisan pamphlet literature published during the period of the True Freedom. See Van der Steen, *Memory Wars*.
35. Knuttel 7210: 'Daer onse voor-ouders soo dapper voor haer vrijheyd gevochten hebben; goed en bloed by 't Land'.
36. Aquila Jacobides, *Rechtvaerdige wapenen des Vereenigde Nederlanden tegen de vyandelijke indruk en heilloose toelig der Fransche en Engelsche koningen: nevens een schriftelijk onderzoek, hoe verre de besprongde Nederlanders op haer goede zaak steunen mogen voor God en de gantsche weereld* (Amsterdam: Winkel-zons Roza-lis, 1672) (Knuttel 10630): 'hoe rechtvaardig stelt haer dieshalven 't Vereenigde Nederland gereed ten tegenweer, tegen die haer vryheid zoo duur gekocht met swaere oorlogs-kosten en overvloedig bloed der voor-ouderen?' and 'als 't niet anders konde zijn, zy wilden de linker arm eten, en met de rechter vechten'.
37. Knuttel 7205: 'andere segghen dat sy in hare handelinge tegens ons deselve machine gebruycken die wel eer de Spanjaert teghens ons gebruyckt heeft'.
38. See on this: Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, 61-103; Olaf van Nimwegen, *The Dutch army and the Military Revolutions, 1588-1688* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 33-7.
39. Een recht lief-hebber van den Hollandschen leeu, *Ernstig gesprek, voorgewallen tusschen drie personen, nopende onse en der Engelsche gelegentheyd waar in verscheyden zaken aan gemerkt en verhandeld werden die in desen tijd noodwendig en nut zijn gelesen en geweten te werden* (Louvesteyn; n.n., 1652) (Knuttel 7256).
40. Knuttel 7210.



41. See on this also: Van der Steen, *Memory wars*.
42. Knuttel 7256.
43. Knuttel 9333.
44. *Een varsche saus, op de oubacke Engelsche venesoen, in Hollandt opgedischt* (n.p.: n.d.) Knuttel 10617: 'Maeckt Karel sich by u verdacht, dat hy het heil des Heeren, verlaet, om Louwijs goude munt, en biedt ons hier-door loot en punt, Hoe kan mijn Prins dat deeren? Sijn deught verseeckert ons gewis dat hy geen landt-verrader is'. See also: *'t Hollandts Venezoen in Engelandt gebacken, wederleyt door d'Amsterdamse pastey-backer tegen syn buyrman* (n.p.: n.n., 1672) (Knuttel 10618).
45. Knuttel 7212.
46. Knuttel 9141.
47. E.g. *Vervolgh schryvens uyt Engelandt aen een Nederlants coopman binnen Enkhuysen, ontrent den tegenwoordigen toestant van de Engelsche en Hollandtsche tractaten* (Enkhuizen: Samuel Samuelis, 1661) (Knuttel 8497).

## 11 Comparing Ruins

### National Trauma in Dutch Travel Accounts of the Seventeenth Century

*Alan Moss*

In the morning of 10 May 1674, Coenraad Ruysch strolled along the walls of Groningen. Only a few days before, the Dutch traveller, a 23-year-old son of a well-off magistrate from Dordrecht, had embarked on a long and expensive Grand Tour through Europe, together with his cousin Dirck van Hoogeveen.<sup>1</sup> During this first stage of his tour, Ruysch would cross the northern regions of the Republic, journey into Germany, and make a beeline south for the Alps and the long-awaited Italian cities beyond. Nearing the German border, Ruysch permitted himself a brief respite in Groningen. Despite the stormy weather, Ruysch spent the morning inspecting the city's ramparts:

Come rain or shine, our cloaks wrapped around our ears, we did not neglect to see that side of the city that was recently besieged by the bishop of Münster. We found little to no damage to the ramparts and the houses, but we remarked that they must have suffered nevertheless: the bricks – new ones next to old ones – seem to have been repaired.<sup>2</sup>

Although the appraisal of a city's fortification was not an uncommon topic in travel accounts, Ruysch's interest went further than mere bulwarks and siege weapons: wrapped tightly in his cloak, he came to inspect the scars from the harm the city had endured two years previously.<sup>3</sup> In 1672, the infamous Disaster Year, the Dutch Republic suffered a threefold attack by enemy troops from England, France and the German dioceses of Cologne and Münster.<sup>4</sup> The bishop and marshal of the latter, Christoph Bernard von Galen (1606-78), besieged Groningen and damaged parts of the southern walls. While the attack lasted for only a month, Ruysch found that the walls of Groningen still bore its marks in the form of pell-mell patchwork of old and restored bricks.<sup>5</sup>

As discussed later on in this article, the Disaster Year had a large impact on Dutch memory, leaving a multitude of poems, pamphlets and horrific engravings in its wake. Ruysch's excursion along the city ramparts can be seen as a close and personal encounter with the not-so-distant past. Using his travelogue and notes on 1672 as a vivid case study, this article

investigates the role of national trauma in a Dutch travel account of the seventeenth century. How did Ruysch reflect on the blows his home country had suffered? What role did trauma play in travel accounts? What do these passages suggest about the formation or reiteration of national identity? To answer these questions, this article first introduces the genre of travel accounts and its advantages and offers caveats for researching national thought. Subsequently, I investigate Ruysch's travelogue and his depiction of 1672 as an influential event for Dutch identity. Finally, in comparison, the importance of the Eighty Years' War and its effect on travel accounts are discussed.

## Travelogues and Comparisons

Coenraad Ruysch's lengthy journal is only one of the many Dutch travel accounts that were made in the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> Travel accounts, written on a Grand Tour, are a complex genre. They were initially meant as an educational exercise. Inspired by humanist treatises on the art of travel, prescriptive and fatherly travel guides encouraged young voyagers to collect and jot down a wealth of knowledge, ranging from rivers and mountains to peoples and customs. In accomplishing that didactic goal, journal writers relied on many oral, textual and visual sources.<sup>7</sup> Travellers transcribed their interviews with the local populace and inspected foreign sites in person, but also heavily borrowed from a vast body of travel texts, varying from instructive guidebooks and treatises to popular and fictionalised journals. Only seldom did they acknowledge their sources.<sup>8</sup> Travelogues, therefore, are a highly intertextual and diffuse genre, parroting and reworking earlier materials. In short, there is always some form of 'discursive overlap'.<sup>9</sup>

Travel accounts can also be seen as 'egodocuments', historical texts that present themselves as subjective retellings in the first person.<sup>10</sup> This genre can offer insight into the rich and formative experiences of travellers: they are the records of confrontations with strange and new people, places and customs. This research derives from the basic assumption that identity gets revealed during moments of conflict: only then did travellers feel compelled to reflect on their own ideas of faith and fatherland. While these moments of conflict are usually held synonymous with war and are therefore related to collective identity, conflict in travel accounts should be considered a broader category that also pertains to highly personal conflicts and tells us more about individual identity.<sup>11</sup> During these confrontations, travellers either found reinforcement for their prejudiced beliefs that their own

country and culture were superior to others, or learned to appreciate or even admire foreign countries and values. Either way, these confrontations and subsequent reflections can be analysed in order to investigate the formation or reiteration of some form of identity – national, religious or otherwise.<sup>12</sup>

Their potential to answer queries about national identity notwithstanding, it would be ill-advised to uncritically treat travel accounts as literal and unembellished records of social experience.<sup>13</sup> There are several caveats that illustrate the blurred lines between initial observation and subsequent depiction. First of all, as shown above, journals are heavily influenced by a large number of other texts. Personal ideas are mixed with earlier observations, writing conventions and time-worn ‘ethnotypes’, commonplaces regarding the characteristics of other peoples.<sup>14</sup> To separate one from the other is not always an easy feat, if possible at all. Secondly, we need to realise that the ‘ego’ in ‘egodocuments’ refers only to the narrator and not to the implied audience. Journals were kept not solely as personal keepsakes, but also as written accounts for the travellers’ benefactors. Financially dependent on a demanding father, looming in the background, scions made sure to appease their journal’s audience by emphasising their intellectual and moral growth and relegating their more worldly transgressions – visits to brothels and seedy inns – to the fringes of a manuscript, if not banishing them altogether.<sup>15</sup> In addition to this function of memento and log, a travel account was an object of curiosity to a circle of family and friends. In pleasing that particular audience, the traveller-author adopts a specific point of focus. While new cities may appear in all sorts of rich and colourful details, many things are summarised or left out: hardly any attention is paid, for instance, to the day-to-day life of a traveller’s company of servants, the tediousness of managing travel papers, or a traveller’s educational strides in fencing and horse-riding.<sup>16</sup>

These reservations show that a travelogue is an intricate amalgam of personal observations, ethnographical information and the reworking of earlier texts and ideas, written by a traveller for future enjoyment – both to him and to others – and to account for his actions and expenditure abroad. Therefore, a travel account lies somewhere in between fact and fiction. In order to use this material to investigate national thought, we need to understand travel writing as ‘a textual space of considerable intricacy, one in which disparate cultures and worldviews meet, clash, and grapple with one another’.<sup>17</sup> We can do just that by radically contextualising a traveller’s observations, scrutinising dates, places and people, and by treating his works as highly narrative structures which describe confrontations with foreign worlds.

In the approach of narrative analysis, one way of investigating national identity is to interpret the basic literary technique of the comparison as one

of the key features of travel texts. According to Chloe Chard, most travel accounts oscillate between two conflicting approaches: an author either revels in the pure otherness and peculiarity of a new place or connects the newness and strangeness of a foreign country with the old, familiar and even rather mundane aspects of his fatherland.<sup>18</sup> In Dutch travel accounts the Republic is used as a touchstone, as a constant point of reference to recognise, comprehend and evaluate foreign sites. As Chard suggests, the comparison is a widespread literary technique, which appears in a variety of topics, ranging from churches and libraries to food and drink. Johannes Lieshoud (1628-63), a traveller in the mid-seventeenth century, for example, noticed that the road between Padua and Fusina held an uncanny resemblance to the path between the Dutch towns of Breukelen and Maarssen, while Constantijn Huygens jr. (1596-1687) compared the height of some waterfalls near Walenstadt to the bell tower of The Hague.<sup>19</sup> These comparisons show not only how foreign sites were discussed, but are also evidence of an act of appropriation. As will be seen below in the case study of Coenraad Ruysch, the meaning of foreign sites was adapted and appropriated in order to provide some form of relevance to the fatherland. In doing so, it also became clear which sites back home were of importance – both to the traveller and to his audience.

However, claiming that comparisons to places back home are indicative of *national* identity is somewhat problematic. As Chard's terminology of 'familiarity' and 'unfamiliarity' already suggests, identifying places of importance in the Republic could be a highly individual practice. Constantijn Huygens, Jr. (1628-97), for example, usually wrote about his father's estates and the close-by locations he knew during his youth in The Hague.<sup>20</sup> Since the term 'familiar' is a rather opaque expression in the analysis of identity, however, it would be better to opt for the term *local* identity, referring to the immediate vicinity of a traveller's youth and upbringing. Since travellers usually hailed from the province of Holland, we could also claim some form of 'Hollandocentric' identity.<sup>21</sup> Although this methodological difficulty exists and needs to be taken into account, the following paragraphs do not focus on this highly individual use of assigning meaning, but on trauma that was felt and reiterated in all sorts of media on a national level. As such, the Disaster Year was an event of national proportions.

### Why Zwammerdam and Magdeburg are alike

After his short stop in Groningen, Coenraad Ruysch turned to Germany. He complained about an uncomfortable ride to Bremen – a journey to

the underworld rather than to Italy – and sojourned in Hamburg and Glückstadt, where he saw the Danish king and his court. Afterwards, he travelled south to Leipzig and Dresden and made a short stop in the city of Magdeburg. On 5 June 1674, Ruysch stepped through the gates of that city and noticed the ruins of houses and churches, laid to waste more than forty years earlier. During this encounter, the young traveller was immediately reminded of the Dutch hamlets of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam:

When we set foot in the city, we immediately thought about Bodegrave and Zwammerdam, although a large number of houses here have been rebuilt, others have been repaired, and many houses are in the process of being restored. We saw the ruins of complete streets and churches underneath our feet. The large church has never been damaged. It stands at the end of a marvellous square, which at one time was surrounded by great, beautiful houses. Now there are only ruins. There used to be another church on that same square, which burned down, but is now being repaired.<sup>22</sup>

In his journal entry, Ruysch refers to one of the bloody episodes of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), the infamous Sack of Magdeburg. In 1631, Catholic troops, led by Field Marshals Pappenheim and Tilly, besieged, plundered and destroyed the Protestant city of Magdeburg. During the ransacking, an all-consuming fire broke out, which reduced large parts of the city to ashes and claimed the lives of thousands. Marshal Pappenheim wrote in his field report that the massacre of Magdeburg was of biblical proportions:

I believe that over twenty thousand souls were lost. It is certain that no more terrible work and divine punishment has been seen since the destruction of Jerusalem. All of our soldiers became rich. God with us.<sup>23</sup>

Although the level of brutality at Magdeburg was not an uncommon sight during the Thirty Years' War, the number of victims – 20,000 according to Pappenheim's count – was unusual indeed. Magdeburg became a symbol of the brutality of Catholic troops and the tribulations of Protestant innocents. The atrocities committed in Magdeburg featured in more than twenty newspapers and almost 250 pamphlets, spread out all over Europe.<sup>24</sup> The German verb 'magdeburgisieren' was coined and came to mean the complete obliteration of a city.<sup>25</sup>

When Ruysch walked through the city of Magdeburg, which was still recuperating from this crippling siege, he was reminded of the destruction



Figure 11.1 Caspar Luyken, 'Maagdenburg door Tilly veroverd terwijl weerloze burgers worden afgeslacht' [Magdeburg conquered by Tilly, while defenceless inhabitants are butchered], in Johann Ludwig Gottfried, *Historische kronyck ...*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Pieter van der Aa, 1698), 1215. Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam during the aforementioned Disaster Year, only two years previous. On the eve of 27 December 1672, the French commander Luxembourg and his troops left the occupied city of Utrecht in an attempt to cross the frozen waters of Holland and reach the city of Leiden. Once Leiden was in their hands, so they thought, the rest of the Republic would soon follow. When the Dutch general Kurt Christoph von Königsmarck (1634-73) heard about the imminent arrival of the French, he decided to abandon the town of Bodegraven and block the passageway into Holland, thereby inevitably bringing Luxembourg's advance to a halt. Königsmarck's manoeuvre, however, left the hamlets of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam defenceless: the villagers were brutally murdered, and the towns went up in flames.<sup>26</sup>

News of the utter destruction of the Dutch hamlets soon reached other parts of the Republic. In the first months of 1673, pamphlets flooded the Republic, with titles such as *Bodegraven and Swammerdam Burning, a Description of the Evil Cruelty and Tyranny of the Enemy, The Cruelty of the French*, and *Holland's Lament, Concerning the Ferocious Invasion of the French*.<sup>27</sup> Especially influential were the shocking images of the Dutch

engraver Romeyn de Hooghe, who vividly depicted the brutality of the 'French tyranny'.<sup>28</sup> The news of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam was recounted in many ways: some authors offered eyewitness accounts of the atrocities or sermonised on the events, while others embellished the incident and demonised the offenders in long and gruesome verses, featuring rape, mutilation, and other forms of sadism. One author summarised the situation as follows:

The damage to the properties could yet be endured, but the misery of that great crowd of innocent people, who were burned alive, murdered, choked and raped, cannot be described: that cruelty cannot be uttered.<sup>29</sup>

Just as Magdeburg had become a symbol of the bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War, the massacre or, to reclaim the German phrase, 'magdeburgisation' of the Dutch hamlets became a symbol of the Dutch Disaster Year. Fanned by a large number of pamphlets, circulating throughout the Republic, the ferocious destruction of the towns became a national trauma, emblematic of the plight of the Dutch. In sum, in the years following the French invasion, the events at Bodegraven and Zwammerdam still stirred the imagination of the Dutch.<sup>30</sup>

The events of 1672 and their brutal depiction explain why the ruins of Magdeburg were so significant to the young traveller. The national trauma of Zwammerdam and Bodegraven struck a personal chord in Ruysch when he visited the German city. His comparison between different atrocities, however, was far from unique.<sup>31</sup> Whereas Ruysch reflected on the Thirty Years' War, many others compared their recently suffered trauma to the closely related, contemporaneous events of the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), when the Dutch fought against Catholic Spain. The *Truthful Historical Account*, for example, made the following comparison:

I often heard my parents speak about the Spanish cruelties, committed at the start of the unrest in Zutphen and Naarden, but the French arson, murder and rape surpass all cruelties of the Spanish.<sup>32</sup>

Many writers and engravers made direct allusions to the atrocity prints of the Black Legend, the vehemently anti-Spanish propaganda that circulated throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Borrowing the title *The French Tyranny*, for example, Wicquefort hinted at similarly named works about the 'Spanish tyranny', associating the cruelty of the Spanish to that of the French.<sup>34</sup> According to Simon Schama, 'The French now substituted for the Spanish





Figure 11.2 Romeyn de Hooghe, 'Franse Tyranny gepleeght op de Hollandse Dorpen' [French Tyranny in the Villages of Holland], in T. van Domselaer, *Het ontroerde Nederlandt, door de wapenen des konings van Vrankryk*. Part 1 (Amsterdam: M. Willemsz. 1674-76), 464. Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

as bloodthirsty and pitiless marauders and Bodegraven and Swammerdam became the theatres of their cruellest excesses as Naarden and Oudwater had been a century earlier'<sup>35</sup>

This use of history as an echo to interpret trauma might explain why Ruysch reflected on the destruction of the Dutch towns. A week before his arrival in Magdeburg, however, he was already confronted with the Dutch Disaster Year. After his visit to Glückstadt, Ruysch decided to make a small detour to Stade. Undeterred by the bad weather and the lack of accommodation, he decided to attend the funeral of the general Königsmarck, the aforementioned commanding officer at Bodegraven. The general had been killed by enemy fire during the siege of Bonn in the fall of 1673, and it had taken several months to return his body to his hometown of Stade, where he would be interred in the family grave.<sup>36</sup> Using the space of seven large folia, Ruysch gave a lengthy and rather matter-of-fact account of the ceremony, paying attention to the funeral procession, the attire of the mourners, and the learned emblems surrounding the coffin.<sup>37</sup> When the preacher began his sermon, Ruysch – all ears – waited for his comments on Königsmarck's actions during the Disaster Year:

Nothing else was said, except for the fact that the deceased commanded the troops of the Prince of Orange [stadholder William III], since His

Highness was away on an important mission. He would have gained a glorious victory, had he not been hindered by the cowardice of one of the principal officers. Following the instructions of His Highness, the deceased was forced to retreat to the city of Leiden and avert any other calamity.<sup>38</sup>

The cowardly officer in this sermon was Colonel Pain-et-Vin (1620-73). While Königsmarck had followed orders and protected Leiden from harm, Pain-et-Vin had abandoned his post at the bulwark of Nieuwersluis and allowed the enemy troops a safe retreat.<sup>39</sup> The Dutch people cried out for blood, and the stadholder obliged, executing the colonel on 23 January 1673.<sup>40</sup> Although he refrained from giving many personal comments, Ruysch's elaborate account of the funeral and his stay in Stade suggest his interest in the commanding officer and the destruction of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam. The case of Coenraad Ruysch illustrates that the experience of trauma was a significant element in travelogues. While the Disaster Year undoubtedly had a large effect on the Dutch imagination, as evidenced by the proliferation of pamphlets and other texts, it was not the first trauma the Dutch had endured. The Eighty Years' War played a significant role in travel accounts as well and can be considered an even more frequently recurring topic.

### Remnants of the Eighty Years' War

Just like the Disaster Year, the Eighty Years' War left a considerable mark on Dutch identity. The uprising against Spain and its settlement at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was a recurring topic in travel accounts.<sup>41</sup> Only thanks to that long-desired and lauded peace treaty could travellers like Ruysch safely ride into foreign territory. As a prelude to his travelogue, the Dutch painter Vincent Laurensz van der Vinne (1628-1702) composed an elaborate poem on the hardships of the war:

... by the blessing of our Lord,  
welcome peace once again has the upper hand.  
Because of that, peace, now in bloom,  
has sparked my desire to travel.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of the Peace of Westphalia, Dutch travellers were still confronted with the traces of the war. Once they crossed the borders of the Republic,

many mentioned German cities and villages that had been razed to the ground. Using summary phrases such as 'completely destroyed' or 'ruined', they described the unattractive sites that marred the German countryside. Considering a traveller's desire to amuse his readership, perhaps it is no wonder that these passages were written in such a succinct manner. After all, passages on beautiful churches and curious ruins were more likely to quicken the imagination than notes on derelict villages.<sup>43</sup> Finally, when stopping in German cities like Nuremberg and Augsburg, large waypoints on the general itinerary, travellers sometimes appropriated sites to fit into the history of the Eighty Years' War. Johannes Lieshoud, for example, visited the castle that hosted the Nuremberg peace banquet and described the painting of the event, *Das große Friedensmahl* by Joachim von Sandrart.<sup>44</sup>

When travelling to France, authors made even more interesting remarks about the Eighty Years' War. Usually after spending some time in the French capital, Dutch travellers journeyed south to the Loire valley, where they visited Huguenot towns such as Blois, Angers and Saumur. The area was so popular in the seventeenth century that the term 'Short Tour' was coined – derived from its more impressive brother 'Grand Tour' – to describe a brief stay in the valley.<sup>45</sup> During their time in these Protestant safe havens, travellers hired private instructors to help them master the French language and to teach them fencing, horse-riding, formal dancing and other skills that were deemed essential for a young man of means.<sup>46</sup>

Due to their prolonged educational stay in the Loire valley, Dutch travellers took time and effort to describe the religious practices and the political situation of their hosts. The Dutch often described the Huguenot villagers as kindred spirits, as 'those of the religion'.<sup>47</sup> In the face of Catholicism in the surrounding country, perhaps it was no wonder that small religious differences and idiosyncrasies faded into insignificance.<sup>48</sup> Travellers recounted the tales of Catholic oppression in Huguenot settlements and drew parallels with the Republic's own revolt against Catholic Spain. Gijsbert de With (1611–92), for example, proffered an epic retelling of the history of La Rochelle.<sup>49</sup> The continuing volatile balance between Huguenot minorities and Catholic rulers in France was often juxtaposed to the Dutch cry for religious freedom during the Eighty Years' War. In their joint combat against Catholic despots, Protestant Dutchmen felt connected to their French counterparts.<sup>50</sup> This lasted up to 1685. In that year, the Edict of Nantes, the decree that provided some level of religious tolerance and safety to Huguenots, was revoked. Whereas the Dutch Protestants were able to cast off the yoke of Catholic rulers, their French counterparts were not so lucky.<sup>51</sup>

Prior to the Revocation, Dutch travellers often made a comparison between their own history of the Eighty Years' War and the history of prosecution of the Huguenot villagers. The political situation of the Huguenots was appropriated in order to reflect on Dutch memory. It is unlikely, however, that these shared historical incidents influenced only national identity. In claiming a common faith these visits to Huguenot settlements suggest a religious identity that transcended national boundaries.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion: Comparing Ruins

Many travellers, concerned parents, and prescriptive travel texts perceived an educational journey as a formative experience or rite of passage. A young man who had set out as inexperienced and bashful was expected to return home changed into a capable and cultured adult, ready to start his career.<sup>53</sup> Those experiences also helped form his identity. It has been shown in this article that national trauma and Dutch history clearly influenced that process. Ruysch's remarks about Magdeburg, his attendance at Königsmarck's funeral at Stade, not to mention the proliferation of pamphlets and poems about the destruction of the hamlets of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam, suggest that the trauma of the Disaster Year influenced his imagination, experiences, and therefore his Dutch identity. While abroad, Ruysch appropriated places and events – Magdeburg and the Stade funeral – and made them fit his personal, Dutch background. In comparison, a similar thing can be said about the Eighty Years' War and the subsequent Peace of Westphalia. Travellers saw the vestiges of the war in Germany and juxtaposed the political instability of Huguenot minorities to that of the Dutch struggle for religious freedom during the revolt against Spain. Dutch visitors appropriated foreign sites and used them to reflect on their own Dutch and religious background and identity. As the case of Coenraad Ruysch demonstrates, travellers compared ruins.

## Notes

1. For more biographical information on Coenraad Ruysch, see: O. Schutte, *Inventaris van het archief van de familie Teding van Berkhout, 1578-1994* (The Hague, National Archives of the Netherlands, 1974), 165-6; M. Prak, *Gezeten burgers: de elite in een Hollandse stad – Leiden 1700-1780* (The Hague: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), 410. An edition of the travel account of Coenraad

- Ruysch can be found online at [www.alanmoss.nl](http://www.alanmoss.nl). I would like to thank Lieke Verheijen for her comments on my translations in this article.
2. Coenraad Ruysch, *Journal van een reis naar Genève, Italië en Frankrijk van Coenraad Ruysch met zijn neef Dirck van Hoogeveen* (1674-77) [The Hague, National Archives of the Netherlands, Family Archive Teding van Berkhout, 1408], f. 2r. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'Wij lieten evenwel niet naer, door dick door dun, met de mantel om d'ooren die sijde van de stadt te gaen sien, van dewelcke den bisscop van Munster de selve laetsmael heeft belegert. Wij vonde geene of weijnich scaden aen de wallen gelijk oock aen de huijsen, maer wij selve veel mosten gelede hebben, dewijle, alles gerepareert sijnde, de nieuwe steene nevens de ouden daer van blijck waeren'.
  3. For the interest of travellers in fortifications, see: Jeremy Black, *France and the Grand Tour* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2003), 103-4; Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel, 1550-1800* (Chur: Harwood, 1995), 80-1.
  4. For a general overview of the Disaster Year, see: Robert Fruin, *De oorlog van 1672* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1972); Petra Dreiskämper, *'Redeloos, radeloos, reddeloos': de geschiedenis van het rampjaar 1672* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998); Luc Panhuysen, *Rampjaar 1672: hoe de Republiek aan de ondergang ontsnapte* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2009).
  5. For more information on the siege of Groningen, see: Egbert van der Werff, *Groningens ontzet 1672* (Groningen: Groninger Museum, 2007).
  6. According to my own count, there are at least 106 seventeenth-century travel accounts. An elaborate, albeit incomplete, compendium has been made by Lindeman, Scherf and Dekker: Ruud Lindeman, Yvonne Scherf and Rudolf Dekker (eds.), *Reisverslagen van Noord-Nederlanders uit de zestiende tot begin negentiende eeuw: een chronologische lijst* (Haarlem: Stichting Egodocument, 1994). Additional sources are summarised in Anna Frank-van Westrienen, *De groote tour: tekening van de educatiereis der Nederlanders in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1983), 345-71, and Gerrit Verhoeven, *Anders reizen? Evoluties in vroegmoderne reiservaringen van Hollandse en Brabantse elites (1600-1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), 374-80.
  7. Stagl, *A History of Curiosity*, 47-94; Frank-van Westrienen, *De groote tour*, 13-48. For an overview of *ars apodemica*, see: Justin Stagl, *Apodemiken: eine räsionierte Bibliographie der reisetheoretischen Literatur des 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 1983).
  8. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 27-8.
  9. D. Christopher Gabbard, 'Stereotyping in Early Modern Travel Writing on Holland', in *Studies in English Literature* 43 (2003), 83-100, at 86; Anna Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 25-8.
  10. Much has already been written on the use and problems of egodocuments. For an introduction, see: Rudolf Dekker, 'Introduction', in Idem (ed.), *Ego-*

- documents and History: Autobiographical Writing in its Social Context since the Middle Ages* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), 7-20; Peter Burke, 'Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1996), 17-28; Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 25-7.
11. For the importance of conflict in the research of identity, see, for example, Robert Stein and Judith Pollman (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identity in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 8.
  12. This is one of the key hypotheses of my PhD project, titled 'A Traveller's Identity in Dutch Grand Tour Accounts of the Seventeenth Century'. For more information, see [www.alanmoss.nl](http://www.alanmoss.nl).
  13. Gabbard, 'Stereotyping in Early Modern Travel Writing on Holland', 84.
  14. For the term 'ethnotypes', see: Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 55-7. For more on the stereotypical representations of foreign nations, see: Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007); Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation*, 15-37.
  15. Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 118-22; Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 25-7 and 245. For the use of coded language and sexuality in travel accounts, see: David Stevenson, 'Recording the Unspeakable: Masturbation in the Diary of William Drummond, 1657-1659', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000), 223-39; Arnout Hellemaans Hooft, 'Een naekt beeldt op een marmore matras seer schoon': *het dagboek van een 'grand tour' (1649-1651)*, ed. E.M. Grabowsky and P.J. Verkruijsse (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), 24-7 and 190-5; J.F. Heijbroek, 'Het geheimschrift van Huygens ontcijferd', in Arthur Eyffinger (ed.), *Huygens herdacht: catalogus bij de tentoonstelling in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek ter gelegenheid van de 300ste sterfdag van Constantijn Huygens – 26 maart-9 mei 1687* (The Hague: Royal Library, 1987), 167-72.
  16. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 21-2, 107-8; Antoni Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (London: Polity Press, 2005), 120-4.
  17. Gabbard, 'Stereotyping in Early Modern Travel Writing on Holland', 84.
  18. Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1-39.
  19. Johannes Lieshoud, *Reisverslag van Johannes Lieshoud* (1652) [Utrecht, RA Utrecht FA De Malapert van Jutfaas 550, transcription Judith Brouwer], 22; Constantijn Huygens, *Journal van de reis naar Venetië*, ed. Frans R.E. Blom (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2003), 95.
  20. Constantijn Huygens, Jr., *Journalen*, ed. R. Fruin (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1888).
  21. For more case studies that grapple with the problems of Dutch identity and geographical delineations, see: N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland: een*



- geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999).
22. Coenraad Ruysch, *Journal van een reis naar Genève, Italië en Frankrijk van Coenraad Ruysch met zijn neef Dirck van Hoogeveen* (1674-77) [The Hague, National Archives of the Netherlands, Family Archive Teding van Berkhout, 1408], f. 9r. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'Wij setten onse voeten niet in dese stadt of begosten aenstonts om Bodegraven en Swammerdam te denken, niet tegenstaende wederom menichte van huysse heel nieuw op gebouwt, anderen wederom herstelt waeren en veel noch onderhanden. Soo saegen wij noch bij na heele straten en kerken onder de voet leggen. De groote kerck is noijt niet bescadicht geweest. De selve staet aen t' eynde van een seer heerlijk plein, t' welck wel eer rontom met groote scoone huysen beset is geweest, doch nu maer met de ruinen van de selve. Op het selve pleijn heeft noch eene kerck gestaen, dewelcke mede verbrandt is, doch wiert nu wederom gebouwt'.
  23. Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 146. Translated by Peter H. Wilson.
  24. Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (London: Routledge, 1984), 125.
  25. Ibid.; Konrad Repgen, *Dreißigjähriger Krieg und Westfälischer Friede: Studien und Quellen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1998), 302.
  26. Panhuysen, *Rampjaar 1672*, 266-80; Donald Haks, *Vaderland en vrede 1672-1713: publiciteit over de Nederlandse Republiek in oorlog* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013), 21-5.
  27. Johannes Quintius, *Bodegraven en Swammerdam in brandt: waer in te vinden is de boosaerdige wreetheyt en tyrannye der Vyanden ...* (Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1673); *De wreetheyt der Francen ...* (Amsterdam: Matthijs Willemsz, 1673); M.V. Machwiths, *Hollandts Wee-klage: over den Verwoeden Inval der Franschen ...* (The Hague: Michiel van Heyningen, 1674). My translation.
  28. For the importance of Romeyn de Hooghe, see: Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, 25-35 and 45-52; Henk van Nierop (ed.), *Romeyn de Hooghe: de verbeelding van de late Gouden Eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008).
  29. A.T. Verduyn, *Oprecht historisch verhael, van 't geen voorgevallen is in Bodegraven en Swammerdam ...* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz, 1673), 10. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'De schade van de goederen, die was noch te verwinnen: maer de ellende van de onnosele menschen die hier met soo grooten menichte verbrandt, vermoordt, versmoort en verkracht zijn, is niet te beschrijven: de wreedtheydt en is niet om uyt te sprecken'.
  30. Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, 21-57. For the analysis of trauma and terror, see: Judith Pollmann and Erika Kuijpers, 'Why Remember Terror? Memories of Violence in the Dutch Revolt', in Jane Ohlmeyer and Micheá Ó Siochrú (eds.), *Ireland 1641: Contexts and Reactions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 176-96.
  31. Nor is it unique to collective memory and trauma, which are always 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing'. Michael Roth-

- berg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.
32. A.T. Verduyn, *Oprecht historisch verhael*, 10. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'Ick heb mijn ouders dickwils hooren verhalen, van de Spaense wreedtheden, bedreven in 't begin van de troubelen tot Zutphen en Naerden, maer dese Franse Brandt, Moordt en Vrouwen-kracht, overweeght alle de wreedtheden der Spanjaerden.'
  33. Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 278-83; Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, 38-41. On the Black Legend, see: Amanda Pipkin, "'They were not humans, but devils in human bodies': Depictions of Sexual Violence and Spanish Tyranny as a Means of Fostering Identity in the Dutch Republic," *Journal of Early Modern History* 13 (2009), 229-64; Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, 'Op Spaanse leest geschoeid: het verleden van de Republiek in zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse romans', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 29 (2013), 265-82.
  34. Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, 38-41; Abraham van Wiquefort, *De Fransche tyrannie ...* (Amsterdam: n.n., 1674).
  35. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 278.
  36. Karl Ernst Hermann Krause, 'Königsmark, Kurt Christoph Graf von', in Rochus, Freiherr von Leliencron (ed.), *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie. Part 16* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1882), 531.
  37. Ruysch, *Journal van een reis naar Genève, Italië en Frankrijk*, 5r-8r.
  38. Ibid., 8r. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'Daer wiert niet anders van geseijt als dat zijn hoocheid, op een wichtich desseijn uyt seijnde, den overleden bij dese absentie het quartier van de prins van Orangie comman-deerende, een seer heerlijke victorie bevochten soude hebben ten waere het selve hem niet was belet geweest door de lafharticheid van een van de voornaemste officiere, dat oock de overleden dienvolgende genootsaecht was geweest, volgens de gelatene ordre van zijn hoocheid, een traiteite op de stadt van Leijde te maeken om alle verdere onheijlen te beletten.'
  39. Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, 23; Panhuysen, *Rampjaar 1672*, 270-2.
  40. Ibid., 50.
  41. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 203-21. Verhoeven identifies 23 texts between 1650 and 1699 and 36 texts between 1700 and 1750 that refer to sites pertaining to Dutch history. Verhoeven is rather abstemious in his description of historical sites, however, and offers a generally modernist perspective.
  42. Vincent Laurensz van der Vinne, *Dagelijckse aentekeninge van Vincent Laurensz van der Vinne*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Fibula-van Dishoeck, 1979), 43. My translation. Original Dutch text: 'doch door des Heeren segen/heeft d'aengename vree weer d'overhand gekregen./De vrede synde nu aldaer in haeren fleur./heeft myn de lust geport om reijsen eens daer deur.'
  43. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 21-2, 107-8; Antoni Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (London: Polity Press, 2005), 120-4.



44. Lieshoud, *Reisverslag van Johannes Lieshoud*, 9.
45. According to Frank-van Westrienen the term 'kleenen tour' (short tour) was first used by Johan Huydecoper (1625-1704) in 1648. The term was not very common though. Frank-van Westrienen, *De groote tour*, 3; Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 15. Following the largely quantitative research of Verhoeven, the popularity of the Loire area can be analysed statistically.
46. According to Verhoeven, this high-end education sufficed as a way to gather a 'signum of excellence', imitating the ways of foreign nobility. *Ibid.*, 58-9 and 70-4.
47. The Dutch phrase 'die van de relige' is used, for example, in the accounts of Pieter de la Court, Jr. (1618-85), Arnout Hellemans Hooft, and Gerard Hinlopen. Pieter de la Court, Jr., *De reizen der De la Courts 1641, 1700, 1710*, ed. F. Driessen (Leiden: Ydo, 1928); Hellemans Hooft, *Een naekt beeldt*; Hinlopen, *Journael en aentekeninge*. Also see, Frank-van Westrienen, *De groote tour*, 125.
48. For more on the perception of Catholicism and practices of observation, see: Sara Warneke, 'A Poisoned and Evil Subject: The Catholic Traveller', in *Idem, Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 160-90; Gerrit Verhoeven, 'Calvinist Pilgrimages and Popish Encounters: Religious Identity and Sacred Space on the Dutch Grand Tour (1598-1685)', *Journal of Social History* 43 (2010), 615-34, at 618-9.
49. *Ibid.*, 625-6.
50. *Ibid.*, 623-7.
51. For an introduction to French Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, see: John McManners, 'The Huguenots: The Great Persecution', in *Idem, Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France. Part 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 565-88.
52. Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685-1772* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), 209-13.
53. Frank-van Westrienen, *De groote tour*, 22-3; Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, 76-105.

**Part Four**  
Maps, Language and Canonisation



## 12 The Roots of Modern Hungarian Nationalism

### A Case Study and a Research Agenda

*László Marác*

The Hungarian proverb 'A nyelvében él a nemzet' ('The nation lives in its language') expresses the fact that the Hungarian language is the most prominent feature of modern Hungarian nationalism. Although this proverb has been documented only from the mid-nineteenth century, I will attempt to demonstrate in this chapter that the Hungarian language is one of the core features of early modern Hungarian nationhood as well.<sup>1</sup> Native knowledge of the Hungarian language is a prerequisite for claiming Hungarian national and cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, only native speakers of Hungarian are considered to be members of the Hungarian nation. Note that this presupposes an *ethnie*, an ethno-linguistic community in the sense of Anthony Smith.<sup>3</sup> This also implies that the ethno-linguistic community is an antecedent to the development of the modern Hungarian nation. Hence, language is one of the most important roots of modern Hungarian nationalism. If this implication is correct, the question arises regarding how Hungarian nationalism should be analysed within the different theoretical paradigms available in the scholarly literature.

The scholarly literature on the origins of nationalism has been dominated by the modernist account elaborated in the work of Hobsbawm and Gellner.<sup>4</sup> The central thesis of the modernist account, contrary to the traditionalist one, is that modern nationhood is an artificial by-product of the 'Great Transformation' produced by the French and the Industrial Revolutions. From this thesis the claim follows that modern nationhood has no premodern, historical antecedents whatsoever. To put it differently, the modernist school claims that there is a radical disjuncture between premodern, existing ethnicities and nation-state formation. However, the work of scholars like Anderson, Holton, May and Smith leaves open the possibility of a 'third' position that postulates a connection between modern nationhood and premodern ethnicity.<sup>5</sup> Although Anderson's position on nation formation falls into the modernist school, there is a contradiction in his work. His notion of 'print capitalism' explains the spread of languages that is central to the forming of homogeneous speech communities and

‘imagined communities’ of the nations. This type of nation formation appears as early as the sixteenth century, as I will demonstrate below. The modernist paradigm hypothesises, however, that there is no connection between early forms of nationalism and the modern industrial states.<sup>6</sup>

The third position keeps many tenets of the modernist theory, such as the recent emergence of national identity, its constructed nature and the separation of political and ethnic nationalisms, but argues that the rise of nationalism due to modernity is shaped by premodern ethnic identities. Notice that the latter position presupposes a sense of continuity that does not preclude cultural and linguistic change and adaptation. Consequently, there are long-run continuities between older forms of cultural allegiance and identity, and contemporary forms of nationalism. Ethno-linguistic identity may be one such lineage that spans the two sides of the supposed ‘Great Transformation’.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, I will defend the third position by providing arguments for the claim that the most important feature of Hungarian ethno-symbolism, Hungarian language identity, is constructed. This claim maintains the insights of the modernist approach, but at the same time I will argue for continuity between the Hungarian ethno-linguistic core and modern Hungarian linguistic nationalism.

## The Development of the Vernacular

The Hungarian language has developed into a standard language from an original vernacular following the pattern for the development of European vernaculars outlined in Peter Burke’s study *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (2004). In the first period from the mid-fifteenth century, when the first books printed in European vernaculars appear, until the end of the seventeenth century, when the vernaculars started to function as official languages in several European countries, the vernacular is used alongside the official language of the state, Latin.<sup>8</sup> During this period the domains of the vernacular are extended with the help of Bible translations, contributing to its standardisation. In the second period, the simultaneous use of the vernacular and the official Latin language leads to a variety of mixing and intermingling with Latin. In the third period, the vernacular sometimes competes with Latin and other vernaculars to become the language of power. In this stage purification takes place, separating the vernacular from its Latin elements. In the final stage, from the late eighteenth century onwards, the ‘nationalisation’ of the earlier vernaculars is put on the agenda in the framework of the unfolding nation-state.<sup>9</sup> In this chapter,

I will demonstrate that the Hungarian language has been 'nationalised' in accordance with Burke's pattern. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that publications in the Hungarian language that have a place in the Hungarian canon have been instrumental in forming the ethno-linguistic community. These publications form a vertical web – successively in time – by reference, co- and cross-reference. This turns out to be the case as well for authors who are part of the Hungarian canon and form a vertical network. These networks are based on similar concepts contributing to the transformation of the original vernacular into the nationalised, purified variety. Vertical webs and networks of publications and authors provide evidence for the continuity of the ethno-linguistic community and the modern nation, and do not support the thesis of a rupture between these entities, as the modernist account would predict.

Azar Gat convincingly argues for abandoning time limits for national identity formation. He even does not exclude going back to the ancient world to find ethnic antecedents to modern nations, questioning the claim that the establishment of early, coherent ethnic communities is dependent on a modern instrument like print.<sup>10</sup> Although in this chapter the starting point of Hungarian ethno-linguistic community formation is the occurrence of print, it is my conviction that Gat's arguments apply to the Hungarian case as well, as the following example illustrates.

Although Latin was the official language of the Hungarian kingdom in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, other vernaculars, including Hungarian, were used as well. The early Hungarian vernacular spoken in the royal court in Buda in the late Middle Ages and early modern period and the language variety used by the Hungarian commoners was the same. This claim is well documented by the first librarian of the Hungarian Renaissance king, Matthias Corvinus (1443–90), the Italian humanist Marzio Galeotto (1427–90).<sup>11</sup> We know from Galeotto's writings on the deeds of Matthias Corvinus that the Hungarian king was plurilingual and spoke Latin, Hungarian, Slavic languages and German, but also that Hungarians, elites, like the court of the king and noblemen, as well as commoners, including the peasants, spoke the same variety of Hungarian.<sup>12</sup> This implies the existence of a single and homogenous Hungarian ethno-linguistic community well before mass print became operative in Hungary around the mid-sixteenth century.

Before we start the discussion of the development of the Hungarian vernacular, two methodological notes are in order. Firstly, with respect to the Hungarian canon, I will heavily rely on the representative study of the Hungarian literary scholar Tibor Klaniczay.<sup>13</sup> The selected authors and works

to be discussed are all integral parts of the Hungarian canon. Secondly, I will elaborate on the cases of the Hungarian canon in an analytic framework of Hungarian history that recognises the following three relevant turning points: 1526, 1711 and 1836. The year 1526 marks the end of the royal kingdom established by the first Christian king of Hungary, Saint Stephen, in 1000 AD. In the Battle of Mohács (1526), the Hungarian royal army was soundly defeated by the Ottomans, and, as a consequence, the Kingdom of Hungary was divided into three parts. The northwestern part of the country, which was considered the continuation of St. Stephen's Hungary, became a Habsburg possession. The central parts of the old kingdom were occupied by the Turks. The royal city of Buda would be dominated for 150 years by the Turkish authority. The eastern parts of Hungary and Transylvania would develop over the course of the sixteenth century into the semi-independent principality of Transylvania under Ottoman domination. This Protestant principality became an important geopolitical actor in the religiously inspired conflicts in Europe. It will be spelled out in more detail below how these developments had repercussions for Hungarian culture and language. The second rupture is the definitive collapse of the Principality of Transylvania as an independent geopolitical actor in 1711, when the Rákóczy Uprising and War of Liberation failed to oust the Habsburgs from Hungary. After 1711, the Habsburgs took possession of the whole of Hungary and re-created St. Stephen's kingdom. The year 1836 is a turning point as well in Hungarian history because in that year the Hungarian language received official status within the Hungarian parts of the Habsburg Empire, marking an important step in the modernisation of the Hungarian language and in the full recognition of the Hungarian language identity.

### **The Period before 1711**

The Habsburg strategy to expand territorially via marriages, expressed in the proverb 'Tu felix Austria et nubia' ('Be happy Austria and marry'), targeted Hungary as well. After the Battle of Mohács the Habsburg dynasty headed by Emperor Charles V took over the northwestern parts of the Hungarian kingdom. The last king of Hungary, Louis II from the Polish-Lithuanian house of Jagiellon who died in the Battle of Mohács, was married into the Habsburg family. Hence, one of the brothers of Louis's wife, Mary queen consort of Hungary and Bohemia, the future emperor Ferdinand I, became king of Hungary after the collapse of the old Hungarian kingdom. The foreign occupation of the country by the Catholic Habsburgs and the

Muslim Ottomans made the teachings of the Reformation that were spreading quickly after Mohács attractive to many Hungarians, and Calvinism, in particular, became popular in the eastern parts of the former kingdom of St. Stephen and the semi-independent Principality of Transylvania. It is in this geopolitical context that the Hungarian vernacular received an important boost.

Inspired by the Reformation, writers, translators and printers like Gáspár Heltai (1510-74), Gáspár Károlyi (1529-91) and Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574-1634) started to publish in Hungarian. Gáspár Heltai was a member of the Transylvanian Saxon minority in Transylvania and had learned Hungarian at later age due to the Reformation. He became a Protestant minister and established the first print shop in Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca in Romania), the most important town of Transylvania. In addition to his translations of religious and historical texts from Latin into Hungarian, he published collections of fables in Hungarian. The latter were inspired by the European humanists.<sup>14</sup> Gáspár Károlyi was a Hungarian Calvinist pastor who translated the complete Bible into Hungarian. The first Hungarian Bible translation was completed in a small village in his native Transylvania, Viszoly, and hence it is referred to as the Bible of Viszoly (1590). Szenczi Molnár was a Calvinist pastor as well who worked as a translator and religious writer. He was present at the translation and printing of the Viszoly Bible.<sup>15</sup> Like Heltai and Károlyi he visited the Wittenberg Academy to complete his theological studies. During his stay in German Protestant principalities he wrote a Hungarian grammar in Latin, 'Nova grammatica Ungarica', which was published in Hanau in 1610.<sup>16</sup> The numerous conversions of Hungarians to Protestant denominations during the early period of the Reformation were partly neutralised by the Counter-Reformation led by the Habsburgs. Instrumental in this effort was Péter Pázmány (1570-1637), a Hungarian Jesuit who became Archbishop of Hungary. Pázmány was active as a theologian, pulpit orator and author involved in religious polemics against the early Protestant writers such as Heltai, Károlyi and Szenczi Molnár. His Catholic apologetics contributed to the standardisation and the creation of the Hungarian literary language.<sup>17</sup> The Counter-Reformation also formed an important inspiration for the resistance against Ottoman pressures on the territory of the former Hungarian kingdom.

The main pockets of resistance against the attacks of the Turks were the isolated border castles. Soldier-poets like Bálint Balassi (1554-94) defended border castles against the Turks, and they wrote about the heroic deeds in the resistance against Turkish attacks. Balassi also wrote poems about everyday life and love stories unfolding against the backdrop of the border



castles' struggles. Such works formed the foundation of modern Hungarian lyric and erotic poetry. Balassi's most famous poem 'Egy katonaének' ('Knights' song') from 1589 is a tribute to the life in the border castles as its first sentence makes clear: 'Knights, what finer worth is there than what the borderlands can show?'<sup>18</sup> Most of the border castles' soldier-poets not only wrote poems about the battles against the Turks but chronicled them in music. Sebestyén Tinódi (1510-66) nicknamed 'Lantos', the lute player, was a notable example.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most important fighters against the Turks was Count Miklós Zrínyi (1620-64), a descendant from a Croatian-Hungarian noble family. He not only fought against the Turks as the highest political and military leader of the Croatian part of the Habsburg Empire, but also employed literary works to urge his countrymen to take up arms against the Turks. Zrínyi drew from the poetry of Balassi and Sebestyén Tinódi. Count Zrínyi wrote the first Baroque epic poems in Hungarian, which recount the heroic deeds of his forefathers in the struggle against the Turks. Furthermore, he wrote a patriotic pamphlet about the ousting of the Turkish occupiers, 'A török áfium ellen való orvosság' (1661) ('An antidote to the Turkish poison') which played an important role in the formation of Hungarian nationalism then and later.<sup>20</sup>

While Count Zrínyi and the Catholics in Habsburg Hungary fought against the Turks, the princes of Transylvania who had adopted the Calvinist faith collaborated with the Ottomans in order to counterbalance the Habsburgs. The Transylvanian princes considered Transylvania as the legal continuation of the old Hungarian kingdom. The language of administration in Transylvania became Hungarian, and Hungarian rulers such as Gabriel Bethlen (1580-1629), who sided in the Thirty Years' War with the Protestant forces, succeeded in setting up a stable Hungarian state administration. Bethlen also managed to improve the educational system and established the Bethlen College in Nagyenyed (now Aiud in Romania). This college served as an institute for higher education of Transylvanian Calvinists who were not allowed to enroll at the universities supervised by the Catholic Habsburgs in Royal Hungary. Transylvania was not able to erect its own university, however. Hence, after the Thirty Years' War Hungarian Protestant students who had first visited the German universities were, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, forced to travel to Western Europe, where they were welcomed at universities in Protestant countries like the Netherlands, Britain and Switzerland. In fact, these universities became destinations for Protestant students from the eastern parts of the former Hungarian kingdom.<sup>21</sup> The numerous cultural encounters between



Figure 12.1 Front page of the 1685 version of the Golden Bible of Amsterdam printed and translated into Hungarian by Miklós Kis Miskolczi (1650-1702). The College Library of the Transilvanian Church District and Library of Theology, Debrecen, <http://biblia.drk.hu/books/show/year/23>, accessed 10 April 2015.

peregrinating Hungarian students and the Western European universities led to an enormous upswing in the use and status of the Hungarian language in culture, theology and sciences.<sup>22</sup> One of the first Transylvanian-Hungarian students in the Netherlands who made important scientific progress in Hungarian was János Apáczai Csere (1625-59).

Apáczai was the first Hungarian scholar in the modern sense. He was the leading Hungarian Protestant scholar and writer of the seventeenth century. He studied at several Dutch universities and was a follower of the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), one of the most influential early Enlightenment thinkers. Apáczai became famous for the first textbook in Hungarian called 'The Hungarian Encyclopedia' ('Magyar Encyclopaedia') based on the philosophy of Descartes and focusing on the idea that 'a nation cannot become happy if it cannot get access to sciences in its own mother tongue but only through foreign languages'. The book was completed in 1653 and published in Utrecht in 1655.<sup>23</sup> The typographer and printer Miklós Kis Miskolczi (1650-1702), who learned the art of typography and printing in the well-known Amsterdam Bleau Printing Company, became famous for his outstanding print-related achievements.<sup>24</sup>

Kis translated and printed the 'Golden' Bible of Amsterdam (1683), a Hungarian-language edition of the complete Bible, in fact a refinement of Károlyi's Vizsoly Bible with an ornamented cover, hence 'Golden'.<sup>25</sup> For his

translations he relied on the work of early Protestant translators such as Heltai, Károly and Szenczi Molnár.

Relations between the Hungarian Protestants and the house of Habsburg reached a low when the Austrian Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) decisively rolled back the Turkish forces from Central Europe, took up with new energy the Counter-Reformation and sold 41 Hungarian Protestant ministers as galley slaves to Naples. These Hungarian Protestants were sold as galley slaves because they refused to convert to Catholicism at their trial in the Hungarian capital of Preßburg (in Hungarian Pozsony, now Bratislava in Slovakia). The case of the Protestant Hungarians led to a sharp reaction in the Dutch Republic, at that time one of the most powerful European sea powers, which had accepted freedom of religion and supported the Protestant case. The sovereign Prince of Orange, Stadholder William III of Orange, ordered his admiral Michiel de Ruyter (1607-76) to free the Hungarian Protestant ministers from the Neapolitan galley. De Ruyter succeeded in doing so on 11 February 1676.<sup>26</sup> One of the surviving galley slaves was the theologian Ferenc Főris Otrókoci (1648-1718) who managed to get to the Netherlands and visited several Dutch universities as a peregrinating student. He defended a dissertation on early Hungarian history and language at the University of Franeker in 1693.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Period between 1711 and 1838**

The failure of the Hungarian Uprising and War of Liberation against the Habsburgs led by the Hungarian nobleman and prince of Transylvania, Francis II Rákóczy (1676-1735), in 1711 forms a clear rupture in Hungarian history. After 1711, the Habsburgs controlled all the former territories of Royal Hungary and also reintegrated Transylvania into their empire. After the defeat of the Rákóczy Uprising, Prince Rákóczy and his inner circle were forced to flee to Turkey where they received asylum. The refugees were denied permission to return to Hungary by the Habsburgs. Rákóczy's chamberlain and private secretary Kelemen Mikes (1690-1761) accompanied the prince of Transylvania to Turkey. In Turkish exile, Mikes wrote 207 fictive letters to a lady in Transylvania. With his 'Letters from Turkey' Mikes laid the foundations for Hungarian literary prose. This epistolary genre was in fashion at that time.<sup>28</sup>

The second part of the eighteenth century was dominated by Empress and Queen Maria Theresa (1717-80) and her son, Emperor and King Joseph II (1741-90). Relations between the Hungarian estates and the house of

Habsburg improved when the Hungarian estates supported the house of Habsburg in the Austrian Succession War (1740–48) fought to decide whether Maria Theresa had the right to rule the realms of the house of Habsburg as a woman. The Hungarian estates swore *'vitam et sanguinem'* to their Queen Maria Theresa in the Diet in 1741. It was under the reign of Maria Theresa that the Hungarian Enlightenment set in. Peregrination to Calvinist Netherlands was not appreciated by the Habsburgs, but they ceased fighting it.

Péter Bod (1712–69), the Calvinist minister, who had during his peregrination to the Netherlands studied at the University of Leiden and after his return to Transylvania worked as a pastor at the court of Countess Kata Bethlen, wrote the first Hungarian literary history, *'Hungarian Athenas'*, in 1766. In this work, Bod cited more than 500 Hungarian authors, including most of the authors discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>29</sup> Bod's *'Hungarian Athenas'* became one of the most important sources for future Hungarian literary research. Another influential peregrinating student was the theologian, linguist, poet and Orientalist György Kalmár (1726–82) who also visited the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. Kalmár was deeply involved in the study of universal and perfect languages and other linguistics projects in which he relied on the work of earlier Hungarian peregrinating students like Otrokocsi.<sup>30</sup> These studies led him to discover the *'radix'* (root) in Hungarian.<sup>31</sup> The full blossoming of the Hungarian Enlightenment did, however, not take place in Hungary but in Vienna, first during the reign of Queen Maria Theresa (1740–80). Instrumental herein was the society of Hungarian Noble Body Guards that she founded in 1760.

The driving force behind this society was a Hungarian nobleman, the officer György Bessenyei (1747–81) who admired Voltaire and the French encyclopedists. Bessenyei followed in the footsteps of the French writers and started to publish in 1772.<sup>32</sup> His works included Classical tragedies, the history of the Hungarian nation, and philosophical prose and poetry. However, Bessenyei's most influential publications are his programmatic pamphlets with ideas and proposals in the domain of cultural politics, including *'Hungarianness'* (*'Magyarság'*, 1778), *'The Hungarian Spectator'* (*'A magyar néző'*, 1779) and *'Pious intention towards a Hungarian society'* (*'Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék'*, 1790).<sup>33</sup> From these works it appears that Bessenyei adopted a view similar to that expressed by Apáczai: sciences are the key to a nation's happiness and sciences can be accessed only in one's mother tongue. Hence, Bessenyei became an advocate of the thesis that modernisation can be achieved only through ethno-linguistic nationalism.<sup>34</sup> These ideas were in full accordance with the literature of the Enlightenment. In practice, this meant that sciences should be transferred

to the members of the nation via their native Hungarian language. However, at the end of the eighteenth century the Hungarian language had the status of a vernacular only and was not fit for the cultivation of sciences yet. Thus arose the idea to make the Hungarian language 'perfect' in order to be able to fulfill this task. In this process, a 'pious society' of writers and thinkers should take the lead in establishing a Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Both of Bessenyei's ideas, the renewal of the Hungarian language and the establishment of a Hungarian Academy of Sciences, would resonate soon. The movement to renew the Hungarian language in order to make possible the social mobilisation of the Hungarian nation would be further accelerated by the centralising efforts of Joseph II. The son of Maria Theresa was a proponent of enlightened absolutism and favoured modernising the Habsburg Empire from above. His Germanisation policies to introduce German as the language of state administration in the territories of the Hungarian parts of the Habsburg Empire as well was received with fierce resistance among the Hungarian nobility.<sup>35</sup> The emerging nationalist movement fuelled by French Enlightenment ideas led Joseph II to withdraw his language reforms in Hungary shortly before his death. This was an important victory for the movement to renew the Hungarian language led by the writer and translator Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831).

Kazinczy is unanimously seen as the most indefatigable agent of the Hungarian language renewal.<sup>36</sup> In his efforts he relied on an extremely broad network of Hungarian scholars with which he corresponded extensively on the renewal of the Hungarian language. He referred in his correspondence to the work of earlier Hungarian linguists, such as the peregrinating students Otrokocsi and Kalmár.<sup>37</sup> The language renewal movement revived the Hungarian language by purifying the Hungarian vocabulary and coining 'pure' Hungarian words to replace the European lexical heritage from Latin, Greek, French and especially German. This led to heated public discussion. The first Hungarian grammar written by a group of professors from Debrecen and published in Vienna in 1795, known as the 'Debrecen Hungarian Grammar' ('A debreceni magyar grammatika'), formulated a prescriptive rule for the renewal and purification of the Hungarian language. According to the Debrecen Hungarian Grammar, these processes should be restricted to the system of the language, i.e. new words should consist of roots and suffixes only of Hungarian stock. Language renewal was also supported by two outstanding scientists, the Transylvanian polymaths Farkas Bolyai (1775-1856), who was professor of mathematics at the Calvinist College in Marosvásárhely (now Tîrgu Mureş in Romania), and his son János Bolyai (1802-60), who served in the Austro-Hungarian army and is the founder

of non-Euclidean geometry. The motivation behind the Bolyais' decision to participate in language renewal was similar to that inspiring Apáczai and Bessenyei, i.e. sciences make a nation happy, but sciences can be accessed only in one's mother tongue.<sup>38</sup> Hence, the Bolyais undertook efforts to extend the lexical domain of Hungarian and coined a number of new Hungarian words in the sciences. In addition to the support it received from those favouring the Enlightenment, Hungarian language renewal later gained importance among the proponents of Romantic nationalism, such as the Hungarian poet, literary critic, orator and politician Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838), who had been a collaborator of Kazinczy.<sup>39</sup> His poem 'Himnusz' ('Hymne') (1823), evoking the glory of Hungary's past, became Hungary's national anthem.

Bessenyei's other idea, the establishment of a Hungarian Academy of Sciences, received support from members of the high-ranking aristocracy, such as Count József Teleki (1790-1855). Teleki, a jurist and governor of Transylvania between 1842 and 1848, was an ardent supporter of making the Hungarian language 'perfect and pure'.<sup>40</sup> The decisive push for the establishment of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was given by the great initiator of social and political reforms in Hungary, Count István Széchenyi. Széchenyi argued in the Diet in 1825 for the establishment of a Hungarian Academy of Sciences. For this purpose, he made available his annual salary as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. Finally, in 1830 the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was established, and Count Teleki became its first president. In 1844, the board of the Academy decided to have compiled a 'great' dictionary covering the entire lexicon of the Hungarian language and satisfying one of the programmatic points put forward by Bessenyei.<sup>41</sup> Two members of the Academy, Gergely Czuczor (1800-66) and János Fogarasi (1801-78), were entrusted with the task. Czuczor was a monk of the Benedictine Order and wrote Romantic nationalist poetry, while Fogarasi worked as a judge on the High Court of Appeal. By that time modernist nationalist claims were in full swing in the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the claim of the modernist school that the modern Hungarian linguistic nation is totally disconnected from earlier antecedents on the other side of the Great Transformation is on the wrong track. I have shown that the premodern Hungarian ethno-linguistic

communities are clearly related to modern language nationalism. This continuity is expressed in the proverb 'The nation lives in its language'. It is clear that those publications and authors that form part of the Hungarian canon discussed above refer, co-refer and cross-refer to each other. The continuous development of the historical-cultural nation implies that an ethno-linguistic speech community precedes the legal political nation. An analytical framework with relevant turning points helps us to see how the authors and Hungarian-language publications of the Reformation provoked responses by the Counter-Reformation. The Hungarian language and speech community were shaped by the Hungarian Peregrination, an early form of globalisation, and cultural encounters driven by the Reformation. Literary publications emanating from the struggles against Turkish rule and Habsburg absolutism are linked with early and late Enlightenment literature. The different kinds of references, co- and cross-references are too subtle and too interwoven to maintain the claim of a rupture around the Great Transformation, as the modernist school presupposes. Not only the web of interconnected canonical literary works but also the vertical networks of canonical authors over time demonstrate that the different stages of the ethnic speech community and the modern language nations are connected.

Note that there is a strong link between the scholars Apáczai, Bessenyei and the Bolyais, whose main motivation to renew the Hungarian language and to spread it among the Hungarian commoners is similar. They argue that the well-being of the Hungarian nation can be achieved only when the sciences can be accessed via the mother tongue. So, in their view, the domain of the Hungarian vernacular must be extended to the sciences as well. Notice that these scholars form a vertical network for they never met during their lives.<sup>43</sup> From this and other continuous vertical networks and webs the conclusion follows that modern development in the Hungarian case can be understood only if ethno-linguistic antecedents are integrated into the paradigm. Because these ties between linguistic antecedents and modernity are much stronger than in the case of Smith's *ethnie*, the Hungarian case justifies taking these premodern antecedents as a form of early modern nationhood.

The claim of continuity between the modern nation and its historical antecedents does not imply that insights of the modernist paradigm should be entirely abandoned. Hungarian also fits the pattern outlined by Burke, who sets up a development pattern for European vernaculars. The essential characteristic of this pattern is linguistic continuity, although Burke accepts the modernist claim that the French Revolution replaced an old regime both in government and language. The new governments were becoming increasingly concerned with the everyday language of ordinary people. However,



Burke admits that changes were not absolute, as I have argued in this chapter. According to him, changes in the linguistic regimes and the idea of the nation were becoming visible before the Great Transformation.<sup>44</sup> Hence, in these cases the changes could not be caused by the Great Transformation itself.

This chapter provides empirical evidence that this hypothesis is correct. In the first stages, the Hungarian vernacular is used alongside official Latin, and its domains are extended, leading to an initial standardisation. Later on there is mixing with Latin, and competing with German for status as the official language of Hungary. In the final stage, language renewal purifies the language and puts its nationalisation on the agenda. Burke observes that at the beginning of European language development Bible translations formed one of the principal means by which printers aided the process of linguistic standardisation.<sup>45</sup>

As discussed above, in Hungary an early pioneer in this effort was Gáspár Heltai, who relied on the heritage of Bible translations of earlier centuries that he printed in Hungarian. In this way, Heltai contributed to the standardisation of the Hungarian language. A revealing reference for Hungarian-Latin code-switching and -mixing are Bessenyei's comments in 'The Hungarian Spectator'. Bessenyei exaggerates when he complains about the dominant use of Latin over Hungarian in written language: 'if we compare the written Hungarian words with the written Latin words, in our country for one Hungarian word there are 100,000 Latin words ...'.<sup>46</sup> However, this quote from Bessenyei indicates that on the eve of the purification of the Hungarian vernacular the written language was a kind of Hungarian-Latin hybrid variety. The key words in the textual discourse during the purification process, i.e. the elimination of Latin words and to a lesser extent German ones, include 'tökélesítés' ('perfection') and 'pallerozás' ('cleaning, smoothing, refining, polishing'). Ironically the root of the latter Hungarian word is a loan word from Latin, i.e. the verb 'polire' meaning 'smooth, polish; refine'. In sum, the purification of the Hungarian language resulted in domain extensions that were in fact a way of modernisation, and standardisation.<sup>47</sup>

## Notes

1. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement No. 613344. Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (London/New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 38-42. The author is indebted to Lotte Jensen for valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.



2. László Marác, 'Guarding the Hungarian Language and Identity in the New Europe: "The Nation Lives in its Language"', in Idem (ed.), *Expanding European Unity – Central and Eastern Europe*, Yearbook of European Studies 11 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 69–90, at 69.
3. Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, 31.
4. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).
5. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1983), 37–46; Robert J. Holton, *Globalization and the Nation State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 97–124; Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 97–120; Smith, *National Identity*.
6. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.
7. May, *Language and Minority Rights*, 72; Holton, *Globalization and the Nation State*, 172.
8. Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 13.
9. Ibid.
10. Azar Gat, *The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 9.
11. Marzio Galeotto, *Mátyás királynak kiváló, bölcs, tréfás mondásairól és tetteiről szóló könyv* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1977), 84–7.
12. Galeotto, *Mátyás*, 57.
13. Tibor Klaniczay, *Handbuch der Ungarischen Literatur* (Budapest: Corvina Verlag, 1977).
14. Ibid., 46–8.
15. Ibid., 44–5.
16. Ibid., 69–70.
17. Ibid., 81–4.
18. In Hungarian: 'vitézek, mi lehet ez széles föld felett szebb dolog az végeknél?'. See Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 59–67.
19. Ibid., 54.
20. Ibid., 85–91.
21. László Marác, 'Root and Recursive Patterns in the Czuczor-Fogarasi Dictionary of the Hungarian language', in Rens Bod, Jaap Maat and Thijs Weststeijn (eds.), *The Making of the Humanities Vol. III: The modern Humanities* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 113–26, at 119.
22. In some cases, the peregrination to the Netherlands continued over generations, as in the case of the Csernátóni Vajda family. See László Marác, 'A Csernátóni Vajda család tagjainak peregrinációja holland egyetemeken a kora újkorban', in Réka Bozzay (ed.), *Történetek a mélyföldről: Magyarország*

- és Németalföld kapcsolata a kora újkorban* (Debrecen: Printart-Press, 2014), 137-71.
23. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 110-1.
  24. József Molnár, *Misztótfalusi Kis Miklós* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, Berlin and Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 2000), 38-60. See for the role of polyglot cities, such as Amsterdam, in the standardisation of the European vernaculars: Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 118.
  25. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 111-2.
  26. See for studies on the relationship between Michiel de Ruyter and Hungary the edited volume: István Bitskey and Gábor Pusztai (eds.), *Michiel de Ruyter és Magyarország* (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Néderlandisztika Tanszék, 2008).
  27. Marác, 'Root and Recursive Patterns', 119.
  28. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 101-3.
  29. *Ibid.*, 112.
  30. Cf. Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language* (London: Fontana Press, 1997), 302.
  31. Marác, 'Root and Recursive Patterns', 119-20.
  32. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 123-6.
  33. See for the work of Bessenyei: György Bessenyei, *Bessenyei György válogatott művei*, ed. József Szauder (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1953).
  34. Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 438.
  35. Imre Mikó, *Nemzetiségi jog és nemzetiségi politika. Tanulmány a magyar közjog és politikai történet köréből* (Kolozsvár: az Államtudományi Intézet, 1944), 9-10.
  36. Hungarian language renewal is called in Hungarian 'nyelvújítás'. See also Kamusella, *The Politics of Language*, 130.
  37. Kazinczy Ferenc, *Levelek*, ed. Mária Szauder (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1979), 886.
  38. See for the language renewal activities of the Bolyais and János's search for a perfect language based on Hungarian: László Marác, 'János Bolyai und das Ungarische als perfekte Sprache', in Cyril Brosch and Sabine Fiedler (eds.), *Plansprachen – ideengeschichtliche Aspekte: Beiträge der 22. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik e. V., 23-25. November 2012 in Berlin Vol. 20. Interlinguistische Informationen. Beiheft* (Berlin: Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik e.V, 2013), 45-55.
  39. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 186-90.
  40. József Teleki, *A magyar nyelvnek tökéletesítése új szavak és új szólásmódok által* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1988).
  41. Marác, 'Root and Recursive Patterns', 115.
  42. Klaniczay, *Handbuch*, 191.

43. I will leave the detailed elaboration of all sorts of vertical networks and webs that display a strong continuity between authors and publications as a task for future research.
44. Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 160.
45. Ibid., 105.
46. In Hungarian: 'mert ha a leírt magyar szókat a leírt deák szókkal öszvetesszük, országunkban jut egy magyarra mindenkor százezer deák szó ...'. See Bessenyei, *Bessenyei György válogatott művei*, 202.
47. Charles A. Ferguson, 'Language Development', in Joshua A. Fishman, Charles A. Ferguson, and Jyotirinda Das Gupta (eds.), *Language Problems of Developing Nations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), 27-35, at 32-4.

## 13 Preserving the Past and Constructing a Canon

### Defining National Taste and Tradition in an Eighteenth-Century Cabinet of Literary Curiosities

*Lieke van Deinsen*

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 1802, the *Bataafsche Maatschappij voor Taal- en Dichtkunde* (Batavian Society for Language and Poetry) announced that it would hold a scholarly competition to address an important issue in Dutch literary culture: ‘*What have been the advances and what have been the setbacks in Dutch poetry over the course of the eighteenth century when compared to earlier ages?*’<sup>1</sup> Three years later, the society determined that the decisive answer to this question had been given by Jeronimo de Vries (1776-1853), who duly received an honorary gold medal. De Vries’s submission was no small achievement, for it constituted one of the first elaborate overviews of Dutch literary history, ranging from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century, in an effort to provide a thoroughly contextualised interpretation of the development of eighteenth-century Dutch literature.<sup>2</sup> While the question that the Batavian Society had formulated was fairly unbiased, De Vries’s four-volume answer can hardly be described as exhibiting an even-handed approach: after exalting the literary heroes of the Dutch Golden Age, De Vries could characterise the generations that succeeded them only as the deplorably untalented progeny of the seventeenth-century masters.<sup>3</sup>

Like many of his contemporaries, De Vries espoused a strongly cyclical view of history, which he also applied to his classification of the different eras in the development of Dutch literature. In his account, the last decades of the seventeenth century marked the end of a golden age and could be followed only by a period of decline in which ‘nearly all bravery, exaltation, rhetoric and originality was maimed and disfigured’ – or to put it differently, the Dutch literary ‘storehouse seemed completely depleted’.<sup>4</sup> De Vries pointed to the dominance of the French literary tradition in the Dutch Republic as one of the principal reasons for this appalling loss of authenticity.<sup>5</sup> As Nicolaas van Kampen (1776-1839) also avowed, the Dutch literati contended with a persistent ‘lack of self-esteem’ that manifested

itself in the 'both ludicrous and pointless imitation of alien manners', leaving little – if any – room for a national literary tradition to flourish.<sup>6</sup>

This perception of the eighteenth century as a period in which the preservation and continuation of a vernacular literary tradition had been a matter of minor importance prevailed for a very long time. De Vries's taxonomy of eighteenth-century Dutch literature had a strong influence on nineteenth-century scholarly discourse, and until fairly recently, research on Dutch literary historiography continued to be dominated by his appraisals.<sup>7</sup> Since the 1980s, however, this stereotypical image has been debunked by various studies that illustrate the richness and diversity of late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch literature. Nevertheless, there is still little research on Dutch literary historiography that describes the eighteenth-century engagement with the literary past as more than a prelude to nineteenth-century scholarship.

As a result of this historiographical bias, critics have often stated that Dutch literary canon formation started to flourish only from the nineteenth century onwards, but a closer look at earlier discourses of literary taste already reveals a surprisingly critical mode of surveying vernacular traditions.<sup>8</sup> After providing a starting point in which the current debate on the formation of literary historiography is sketched, this chapter addresses an example of eighteenth-century cultivation of the Republic's literary heroes by presenting the case of the 'Panpoëticon Batavûm' ('All Dutch Poets'), a wooden cabinet that contained portraits of over three hundred Dutch poets. Its peculiar history, which will take us through the entire eighteenth century, reveals how this unique collection of portraits became an influential embodiment of a consistent and harmonious Dutch literary tradition, thereby countering the strongly negative discourses of decline and Frenchification that pervaded Dutch culture.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, then, the Panpoëticon Batavûm should be interpreted as an open, interactive and – above all – tangible consolidation of a vernacular literature that had come under pressure. As such, it is emblematic of a typically eighteenth-century way of engaging with the literary past.

## Literary Tradition as a Nineteenth-Century Phenomenon

The predominant focus of literary scholars on the first decades of the nineteenth century as the dawn of literary historiography is exemplified by the recently published study *Historiezucht* by Marita Mathijssen, which underlines conventional depictions of the Dutch eighteenth century

as an age of cultural decline and substantiates the strongly ideological and nationalistic tone of nineteenth-century accounts dealing with the (literary) past. Citing the institutionalisation of Dutch literature as an academic discipline in 1797, Mathijsen, like many others, chooses to situate the creation of the Dutch literary tradition in the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Although Mathijsen points briefly to some earlier examples of engagement with the literary past, she admits that 'it is hard to believe that around 1800 not a single chronological overview of the history of Dutch literature had appeared and thus barely any awareness of the literary development of the vernacular existed amongst the educated middle classes'. In the same vein, she also maintains that 'an awareness of a continued line, in which one genre evolves into another and in which writers react to their predecessors' did not exist before the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> This lack of continuity in perceiving the literary past had important implications for the construction of a literary history and a cultural canon, Mathijsen argues: 'Only when texts and writers are no longer perceived as isolated phenomena but are placed in a *chain of being*, can it become possible to write history, to engage in the formation of a canon, and to preserve the literary past, for instance, by publishing editions and collected works'.<sup>12</sup>

While it might be conceded that modern literary historiography indeed originated in the early nineteenth century, an exclusive focus on this period detracts from earlier manifestations of the perception of the literary past. As Joan DeJean puts it: 'Each age has its canon, its own peculiarly idiosyncratic vision of literature of preceding centuries. One way of approaching the study of canons is palimpsest- style, by peeling back superimposed layers of critical judgement in search of the hierarchies and the process of inclusion-exclusion that commentators of a given period developed to package contemporary literary production and that of earlier ages'.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen has proposed a broader definition of literary historiographies as 'texts that, in one way or another, and for various reasons use various frameworks to make their readers aware of literary information from the past'.<sup>14</sup> In trying to uncover such historiographical roots, both Schenkeveld-van der Dussen and Eddy Grootes, for example, have concentrated on the second half of the seventeenth century, arguing that the beginning of Dutch literary historiography was marked by Geerardt Brandt's (1626-85) editions of Hooft's and Vondel's works, to which he added detailed biographies. In this way, the lives and works of famous poets became the subject of historiographical studies, which paved the way for the monumentalisation of the literary past.<sup>15</sup> In many cases, such biographies

did not present a truly factual account of an author's life; more often than not, they sought to disseminate an idealised image that might function as an *exemplum* for young and aspiring writers. Strung together, these individual examples could eventually form a chain of good authors – or in other words, a literary canon.

### The Case of the Panpoëticon Batavûm

Without a doubt, one of the most compelling images of eighteenth-century engagement with the literary past is the *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, a collection of portraits of Dutch poets and men of learning both past and present. In 1719, the Amsterdam painter, engraver and amateur poet Arnoud van Halen (c. 1673-1732) commissioned a wooden cabinet that would come to function as the repository of over three hundred little portraits. However, the formal enshrinement of this remarkable collection did not mark its beginning, nor its end: Van Halen had already started accumulating his collection at the turn of the eighteenth century, while after his death, the cabinet and its contents changed hands several times as cultural connoisseurs and literary societies sought to acquire the Panpoëticon Batavûm: in 1732, after Van Halen's death, the cabinet came into the possession of the wealthy Amsterdam merchant and art lover Michiel de Roode (1685-1771), who added over one hundred portraits – mostly depicting contemporary poets – to the collection. At the end of the century, the cabinet came to function as the centrepiece in the meeting room of the Leiden art society *Kunst Wordt Door Arbeid Verkrege*n (Art Is Attained through Labour). During their annual meetings, the society members would hold a vote to decide which new portrait was to be added to the cabinet.

It should be noted, however, that the Panpoëticon's renown extended far beyond the limited circles of its successive owners. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the cabinet inspired dozens of poets to articulate their strongly affective reactions to beholding this ground-breaking depiction of Dutch literary history at a time when Dutch culture, as stated above, was primarily described in terms of decline, Frenchification and 'the waning of the Golden Age'.<sup>16</sup> The Panpoëticon was an important reminder of the exact opposite, for, as one contemporary avowed, this cabinet was not a sealed-off 'mausoleum' in which the literary heroes of the past had been entombed.<sup>17</sup> Van Halen's collection should rather be considered as an active memory which served the burgeoning formation of a Dutch literary canon: it functioned as a 'temple of memories' dedicated to the Dutch realm of

poets, which provides unique insights into the eighteenth-century choices, constructions and endorsements of a Dutch literary tradition.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Panpoëticon received considerable attention from contemporary poets and boasts a rich and thoroughly documented history, its standing in Dutch academia was, until fairly recently, rather low. Art historians have frequently pointed out the portraits' poor aesthetics and lack of iconographical taste. In particular, those made by its founder Van Halen are considered to be 'absolutely uninteresting' from an art historical point of view.<sup>19</sup> Literary historians, too, have shown little interest in the collection, mostly restricting themselves to criticising the three-hundred-page panegyric that Lambert Bidloo wrote in 1720 to celebrate the completion of the wooden cabinet. In his overview of Dutch literary historiographers, Gerard Brom, for example, characterises Bidloo's *Panpoëticon Batavûm* as the output of an 'untalented poet' who fails rather glaringly in attempting to stage a 'group image of our poets' and achieves little more than creating 'a literary mausoleum in boring, doggerel verse'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Bidloo's style of writing is not very appealing to our modern aesthetic; more often than not, it reminds us, as Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen has stated, 'of the uncontrolled ramblings of an old man'.<sup>21</sup> However, since the publication of René van Stipriaan's somewhat more appreciative account of the collection, the academic interest in the Panpoëticon has been on the rise.<sup>22</sup> In the latest literary history of eighteenth-century Dutch literature, for example, the collection has been described as a family portrait of Dutch literature.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, Marleen de Vries interprets Van Halen's eighteenth-century collection of authors' portraits as an embodiment of 'the need for a *visible* national literature', while a recent article by Ton van Strien gives a more detailed account of the value of Bidloo's extensive eulogy to Dutch cultural history.<sup>24</sup>

What is still missing from such appraisals, however, is an understanding of how the Panpoëticon Batavûm was embedded in the typically eighteenth-century culture of collecting and, even more importantly, how it contributed to the creation of a Dutch literary tradition and therefore could be described in terms of the materialisation of national thought.<sup>25</sup> By analysing the material collection as well as the history of its ownership and the literary responses that it inspired, I will illustrate how the Panpoëticon might be interpreted as a cultural artefact that played an important role in the articulation of a national literary history. By facilitating affective encounters with the Dutch literary past while at the same time presenting itself as a cultural sanctum that might yet be attained by aspiring poets, the Panpoëticon allowed its contemporary observers to construe a powerful historical narrative even as they aspired to literary apotheosis themselves.





Figure 13.1 Jan Goeree, *The Panpoëticon Batavûm*. Engraved title page, 1720. University Library Radboud University Nijmegen.

## A Cabinet of Literary Curiosities

As a material (and, eventually, textual) embodiment of cultural heritage, the Panpoëticon's nature and structure might be elucidated by referring to the general popularity of collecting cultural items in early modern Europe. This trend was especially noticeable in the Dutch Republic, where the

trade routes of the Dutch East India Company brought countless objects to Amsterdam, only to fall into the eager hands of aspiring collectors. These foreign objects not only created a large interest in unknown and exotic cultures, but also led to debates on Dutch cultural heritage. Likewise, collections of portraits proved to be useful starting points in exploring the highlights of a nation's cultural history. From the Renaissance onwards, so-called *virii illustri* or *famosi*, the pictures of famous figures from both the past and the present day, could function as *exempla* that increased the observer's historical awareness and instilled a feeling of belonging to an enduring genealogy of successful predecessors.<sup>26</sup> On viewing these portraits, the observer would come to a taxonomical understanding of the collection by ascribing common characteristics to its various constituent elements and establishing affinities between individuals. As a result, a sense of tradition and cultural identity could originate from the act of surveying a collection.<sup>27</sup>

Until fairly recently, scholars predominantly described the motives of late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century collectors in terms of an encyclopedic desire to possess a representation of God's creation. As one contemporary states while discussing the collecting mania of his time, such collectors tried to compile 'a large world in miniature' within the security of their own homes. However, by focusing on the selecting and ordering principles that underlie the formation of numerous singular collections, historians have recently come to question whether eighteenth-century collections were primarily motivated by encyclopedic desires. In such revised interpretations, these collections were not always intended to be a mirror of God's creation, but rather, as the American science historian Lorraine Daston argues, as 'a vision of history forged by unique individuals'. In this respect, the analytical emphasis might be said to shift from the early modern collection itself to the early modern collector and the collection's observers, for it was, to quote Daston again, 'not the objects themselves but rather the responses they were intended to evoke that impressed the contents of the cabinet with a certain unity'.<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately, contemporary reflections on the selection and ordering principles of Panpoëticon are legion. Although initially all men and – sporadically – women of letters could be portrayed by Van Halen, even the earliest reflection on the collection stresses that the cabinet's primary function was to assemble the *foremost* Dutch poets and thus to create a material rendition of the highlights of the national literary past. Indeed, in his tribute to the collection, the well-known poet and theatre director Balthasar Huydecoper emphasises the 'national' character of the cabinet. The Panpoëticon, he argued, did not harbour the bloodthirsty Englishman,

the snobbish Spaniard, the lascivious Frenchman, or the militant German, and would crown only the Dutch 'Batavians' with laurels.<sup>29</sup> Huydecoper explicitly rejects all foreign writers and instead celebrates the greatest Dutch poets, who 'cherished their lives not as highly / As honour and duty and the beloved fatherland'.<sup>30</sup> Some contemporaries even placed the Panpoëticon in direct competition with foreign collections of illustrious patriots. As might be expected, the French were often cast as the 'enemy' in such cases, as the following poem by Hendrik van Bracht, written in 1742, illustrates:

Did Gaston of France flaunt with good reason,  
Taking pride in his highly renowned cabinet of coins?  
Did he deserve his fame for owning that invaluable treasure  
Of minted portraits, in the French metropolis?  
If that be so, is *De Roode's* glory not infinitely greater?  
Gaston's pride should bow its head in shame  
To the Palace of Poetry, which his diligence raised anew:  
There, the dead once again enjoy the light,  
And the living find themselves immortalised.<sup>31</sup>

Van Bracht refers to Gaston d'Orleans's (1608-60) famous collection of coins, which was so enormous that it occupied six rooms of the Luxembourg Palace. In the 1720s, the cabinet was placed in the Royal Library of Paris and became a symbol of the French dynasty. In his poem, Van Bracht argues that if d'Orleans's collection could function as an icon of French grandeur, the Panpoëticon might become a superlative illustration of the invincibility of Dutch culture in the face of widespread Frenchification.

The truth was somewhat less straightforward, however, since the contents of the Panpoëticon were more flexible than the Republic's national boundaries: especially during the years when Van Halen still possessed the cabinet, non-Dutch men of learning were also added to the collection. In the preface to his aforementioned eulogy, Lambert Bidloo reflected in detail on Van Halen's criteria in selecting portraits for inclusion. Although the Panpoëticon Batavum was intended – as its name suggests – to comprise the portraits of Dutch poets, exceptions were made for authors who, 'because of their scholarship and erudition, especially in the field of poetry, have been appointed to professorships and other positions, and have thus been Hollandised, and, as one might say, naturalised, regardless of their country of origin'.<sup>32</sup> This stipulation provided the necessary leeway to include distinguished foreign scholars, such as Baudius, Gronovius and Salmasius, in the Panpoëticon. According to Bidloo, authors who had immigrated to

the Republic would often flourish on Dutch soil. The intellect of the French philologist Scaliger, for example, came into full bloom only when he was appointed to a professorship at the University of Leiden.

In addition to applauding the Panpoëticon's ability to absorb prominent foreign scholars in its national framework, poets also praised the collection's accessibility to contemporary writers. Over the course of the eighteenth century, new portraits were constantly added to the collection. As early as 1720, Bidloo stated that while writing his *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, he had to work to keep pace with all the new faces that were deemed worthy of enshrinement in the 'literary treasure chest'.<sup>33</sup> He compares the expansion of the collection to a house that is constantly under construction to provide room for an ever-growing literary family. This sense of ceaseless accumulation is also visualised in the frontispiece that the engraver and painter Jan Goeree (1670-1731) produced. This engraving is one of the first images of the cabinet and laid the foundations for a lively visual tradition that characterised the cabinet's eighteenth-century reception. Goeree's frontispiece provides a detailed image of how the Panpoëticon must have looked at the time and places the wooden cabinet in a location that resembles the Pantheon, to which the background of the engraving testifies. This reference to the famous Roman building not only underlines the sacred character of the Panpoëticon, but also emphasises its ability to overcome the ravages of time, as Bidloo explicates in one of the extensive footnotes that characterise his writing.<sup>34</sup>

The cabinet, then, is entrusted with the preservation of the Dutch literary tradition, as the upper portion of Goeree's engraving reveals. At the very top stands Apollo, the patron god of music and poetry, depicted with a lyre, his personal attribute. Apollo is placed against a relief that depicts the Dutch Parnassus, the poets' mountain, where he is surrounded by the nine Muses. On the left and right sides, we see the personification of Fame blasting her trumpet in honour of Vondel and Hooft, who represent the foremost poets in Dutch literary history. More importantly, however, the naked figure in the foreground carries a portrait depicting the poet Joachim Oudaen (1628-92), an epigone of Vondel, which has yet to be placed in the cabinet. Propped against a pilaster, a portrait of Antonides van der Goes (1647-84) can also be seen, while in the rotunda of the temple, a group of figures dressed in Classical togas are seemingly engaged in a discussion about yet another potential addition. Finally, the cherub in front of the Panpoëticon allows the observer a glimpse of the cabinet's interior, which is intended not only to arouse his or her curiosity, but also to underline the open character of the cabinet. The Panpoëticon, then, is presented as a majestic yet accessible



Figure 13.2 Paulus Constantijn la Fargue, *De vergaderzaal van het genootschap 'Kunst wordt door arbeid verkreegen'*, painting, 1774. Museum De Lakenhal (Leiden).

sanctum where not only the literary heroes from the past reside, but also where contemporary writers and even future poets might eventually earn their place and become part of the august Dutch literary family.

### The Material Presence of Literary Memory

In light of this prospect of literary apotheosis, it is not surprising that the Panoëticon Batavûm appealed to numerous poets throughout the eighteenth century. Although public museums were not established in the Dutch Republic until the early nineteenth century, the cabinet became a semi-public attraction to lovers of literature from all corners of the land, while its status as a cultural sanctuary for a Dutch literary tradition was likewise confirmed by frequent visits from contemporary poets. The poet and historiographer Pieter de la Ruë, for example, repeatedly left his home province of Zeeland to go on what might be described as literary sight-seeing tours. In 1735, one of his trips brought him to the house of Michiel de Roode, where he gazed admiringly at the collection of portraits.<sup>35</sup> In his notes, he

expresses his impressions of this ‘tasteful curiosity’ that is ‘well worth seeing’.<sup>36</sup> De la Ruë was not impressed only by the collection itself and its remarkable history, but also by the large number of poems that previous visitors had written in honour of the Panpoëticon. In De Roode’s *Album Amicorum*, De la Ruë read poetical testimonies of the ‘foremost living poets’ and their encounters with the Panpoëticon.<sup>37</sup> He found himself unable to resist the temptation to add his own versified thoughts to De Roode’s book, and his dreams came true when his contribution was rewarded with ‘an offer that is hard to refuse’: De la Ruë was asked to sit for a portrait himself. This invitation confirms the interactive nature of the cabinet: by demonstrating their skill, contemporary poets could earn their place in the Dutch literary pantheon.

The Panpoëticon maintained its public accessibility in the meeting room of the aforementioned Leiden art society *Art Is Attained through Labour*. This openness became a defining characteristic of the collection and was broadly advertised as such. The prestigious art journal *Algemeene Kunst- en letterbode*, for example, states in its first issue of 1790 that

Since ... the Society did not acquire this treasure merely for its own sake, but rather to keep the names and achievements of famous men safe from oblivion, art lovers should not neglect the opportunity to behold this valuable and noteworthy piece; he who desires to do so, needs only to register with one of the administrators to be granted access to the collection.<sup>38</sup>

The Panpoëticon’s reputation even extended beyond the Republic’s borders. For example, the Swedish philologist and bibliophile Jacob Jonas Björnsthåhl (1731–79) paid a visit to the Leiden art society’s meeting room on one of his *grand tours*. In one of his letters, he describes how he is guided by one of the society’s patrons and comes eye-to-eye with ‘the pictures of all Dutch poets’.<sup>39</sup>

Due to this open-door policy, which was also espoused by its previous owners, several revealing accounts have been written on the intense emotional reactions that the glorious sight of the renowned cabinet produced. The Frisian poet H. Post, for example, describes how he stood transfixed in the doorway of the cabinet, overwhelmed by its grandeur and wondering who he should praise the most for this startling creation.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Balthasar Huydecoper – whose portrait would be added to the collection a few years later – recounts how he enters the cabinet and is warmly welcomed by Apollo and the Muses of tragedy and comedy, who accompany him as he beholds the austere collection of writers.<sup>41</sup>



Once inside the Panpoëticon, then, observers found themselves surrounded by lively memories of the literary heroes of the past. One contemporary described his experience when he visited the cabinet in 1729 in terms that underline the emotional resonance of looking on the nation's literary heroes:

There, despite their deaths, might I look upon their august likeness.  
 There might I converse with Hooft and Vondel.  
 There might I see the smiling soul of great Konstantijn [Huygens].  
 There, in sparks of joyful light, shines Antonides,  
 Among those phoenixes of former and latter years.<sup>42</sup>

How natural this amalgamation of past and present must have felt is made explicit when, for example, the aforementioned Lambert Bidloo states that he finds the ghost of the Amsterdam Mennonite poet Reyer Anslo to be 'a pleasant dinner guest'.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the anonymous author of the poem 'To Mr Arnoud van Halen, on his Noble Art Cabinet of Portraits of Dutch Poets' shows how the boundaries between the cultural past and present literally dissolve as dead literary heroes are revived when the cabinet is opened. The author claims that, in the Panpoëticon, 'they live again', for visitors might notice how:

... their mouths,  
 Even in death, would seem to speak  
 And their bodies break free from their tombs  
 As if they stood before us in the flesh.<sup>44</sup>

The signature at the very end of the poem suggests how literally we should take these words, for the anonymous author signs with the initials I.V.V.: the familiar signature that Vondel, the most renowned of Dutch poets, used as an authentication of his authorship. Through this literary game, the anonymous author of the poem literally brings the so-called Prince of Poets back to life, reviving his voice in contemporary literature fifty years after his death.

### **The Ironic Ending of the Story of the Panpoëticon Batavûm**

The Panpoëticon prospered within the rooms of the Leiden art society until the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, 1807, for at a quarter to four, the city centre of Leiden

was utterly devastated when a ship brimming with gunpowder exploded near the Rapenburg, leaving the city in ruins. In addition to causing 151 deaths and leaving more than 20,000 wounded, the disaster also severely damaged the Panpoëticon, as the Remonstrant minister Jan Roemer (1769-1838) described in his detailed account of the disaster:

all the rooms have suffered severe damage, and the beautiful auditorium, too, has been utterly devastated, the life-size statue of Apollo has fallen over and lies buried: the *Pan Poëticum* has been pulverised, the extremely life-like portraits of the poets have been damaged and are strewn about here and there ... – perhaps the entire thing has been destroyed forever.<sup>45</sup>

Roemer's description of the Panpoëticon being utterly ruined is something of an overstatement, and the wooden cabinet was not lost in the aftermath of the disaster. Ironically, the remains of this celebrated collection of portraits, which had managed to stay together for over a century and had embodied the pride of the nation's vernacular literary tradition, were afterwards offered to Louis Napoleon. Following the advice of Cornelis Sebillé Roos (1754-1820), the former director of the *Koninklijk Museum (Royal Museum)*, which would later become the *Rijksmuseum*, the French king of Holland refused the offer, however, as the director characterised the collection as being 'highly mediocre' and not worth purchasing: the portraits, Roos told him, were simply 'all of the same size so that they could fit together in the drawers of a small cabinet'.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, the typical, eighteenth-century way of conserving the literary past seemed rather old-fashioned to Roos, and its lack of aesthetic appeal to contemporary sensibilities obscured the collection's ideological value.

As a result, the remains of the Panpoëticon went up for sale. On the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 1818, 'the universally renowned Pan Poëticon Batavum, or a collection of three hundred and fifty painted portraits of the foremost poets, poetesses and scholars of our fatherland' went under the hammer at an auction house in Amsterdam.<sup>47</sup> Ironically, one of the brokers was the literary historian Jeronimo de Vries, whom we met at the beginning of this article as the author of a prize-winning essay on eighteenth-century literature. Eventually, the collection fell into the hands of an art dealer who sought only to make a profit, and the portraits were dispersed as they became part of private collections throughout Europe. Nowadays, 22 of the more than 300 portraits can be seen in the exhibitions rooms of the Rijksmuseum, and very little of their former glory and attractive power is left for those who do not know their story.



## Conclusion

The history of the Panpoëticon Batavûm shows us how involvement with the literary past was in fact not a phenomenon exclusive to the nineteenth century. Indeed, within the early modern culture of collecting and cabinets of curiosity, the wooden cabinet proved to be a highly appealing way to encounter the national literary past. By beholding the famous collection of portraits, the observer could literally engage him- or herself with the literary past and generate a feeling of possibly becoming the next branch on the glorious and ever growing family tree of Dutch literature. The individual author portraits that were part of the collection were not perceived as singular writers, but placed in the perspective of the development of a national literary tradition that was strongly rooted in the seventeenth century. They therefore indeed become part of a literary *chain of being*.

## Notes

1. 'Welken zyn de vorderingen, welke is de veragtering der Nederduitsche dichtkunde, gedurende de achttiende eeuw? in vergelyking van vroegere tydperken.' For the role of the literary past in the society, see: Joost Kloek & Wijnand Mijnhardt, *Blauwdrukken voor een samenleving* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2001), 492-3.
2. De Vries's submission, which arrived in print as *Proeve eener geschiedenis der Nederduitsche dichtkunde*, was not the first nineteenth-century attempt to write a history of Dutch literature. Both, Jacob van Dijk and Mathijs Siegenbeek, for example, take precedence. However, their works were published later. For more elaborate accounts of De Vries's submission, see: Wim van den Berg, *De ontwikkeling van de term 'romantisch' en zijn varianten in Nederland tot 1840*. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 168-75; Wim van den Berg, 'Het vaderschap van de Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedschrijving', *Literatuur* 6 (1989), 320-4, at 323-4; Evert Wiskerke, *De waardering voor de zeventiende-eeuwse literatuur tussen 1780 en 1813* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1995), 223-60; Francien Petiet, *Een voldingend bewijs van ware vaderlandsliefde. De creatie van literair erfgoed in Nederland, 1797-1845* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2011), 109-48; Lotte Jensen, 'De gouden eeuw als ijkpunt van nationale identiteit. Het beeld van de gouden eeuw in verzetsliteratuur tussen 1806 en 1813', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 28/2 (2012), 161-75; Lotte Jensen, 'The founding father of Dutch literary history: Jeronimo de Vries (1776-1853)', in Rick Honings, Ton van Kalmthout and Gijsbert Rutten (eds.), *Language, Literature and the Construction of a Dutch National Identity (1780-1830)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016, forthcoming).

3. For more elaborate accounts of nineteenth-century perceptions of the eighteenth century, see: Wim van den Berg, 'De achttiende-eeuwse letterkunde door negentiende-eeuwse bril', *De Achttiende Eeuw* 26/2 (1994), 169-76; Anton van de Sande, 'De achttiende eeuw in de ogen van de negentiende-eeuwen', *De Achttiende Eeuw* 26/2 (1994), 153-68; Piet Buijsters, 'Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedenis van de achttiende eeuw: oordeel en vooroordeel', in W.F.G. Breckveldt, J.D.P. van Halsema, E. Ibsch & L. Strenghtolt (eds.), *De achtervolging voortgezet. Opstellen over moderne letterkunde aangeboden aan Margarethe H. Schenkeveld* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1989), 40-61; Inger Leemans & Gert-Jan Johannes, *Worm en donder. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1700-1800: de Republiek* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2013), 35-51.
4. 'Bijna alle stouthed, verhevenheid, hoogdravendheid en oorspronkelijkheid werd gekneusd en misvormd'. Jeronimo de Vries, *Proeve eener geschiedenis der Nederduitsche dichtkunde* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allert, 1810) vol. 2, 11. 'De voorraadschuur [leek] compleet uitgeput'. De Vries, *Proeve eener geschiedenis*, vol. 2, 7.
5. The idea that the Republic was in decline during the eighteenth century is not an invention of nineteenth-century literary historiographers, though. Contemporaries, such as Justus van Effen, complained about the lack of originality among the writers of their generation and the systematic absence of a typically Dutch literary style. These discourses on the decline of the Dutch literature, especially those expressed in the societies of the second half of the century, should be taken with a grain of salt. Marleen de Vries, *Beschaven! Letterkundige genootschappen in Nederland 1750-1800* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2001), 18.
6. 'De bespottelijke zoowel als heillooze nabootsing van vreemde zeden'. Van Kampen, *Redevoering over den geest der Nederlandsche letterkunde, vergeleken met die van andere volken* (Haarlem: De erven François Bohn, 1830), 26.
7. Van den Berg, 'De achttiende-eeuwse letterkunde door negentiende-eeuwse bril', 171.
8. For statements on earlier manifestations of Dutch literary historiography and canon formation, see: Eddy Grootes, 'Geeraardt Brandt en de Nederlandse poëzie', E.K. Grootes and J. den Haan (eds.), *Geschiedenis, godsdienst, letterkunde. Opstellen aangeboden aan dr. S.B.J. Zilverberg* (Roden: Nehalennia, 1989), 139-46; M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Retorica van onderzoek. Vormgeving van publiek van Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedenissen* (Utrecht: Faculteit der Letteren, 1990); Idem, 'Maart-Mei 1682: Joannes Vollenhove correspondeert met Geeraardt Brandt over diens leven van Vondel. Het begin van de Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedschrijving', in Idem (ed.), *Nederlandse Literatuur, een geschiedenis* (Groningen: Martinus Nijhoff, 1993), 298-302.
9. With the phrase 'Dutch culture' I do not mean only literature written in the Dutch language, but also cultural products that were experienced or

- appropriated as one's own. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Dutch Republic was essentially a multilingual community. Therefore a stringent distinction on linguistic grounds could prove to be very difficult.
10. See, for example, Joep Leerssen, 'Literary Historicism: Romanticism, Philologists, and the Presence of the Past', *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly* 65 (2004) 2, 221-43; Lotte Jensen, *De verheerlijking van het verleden. Helden, literatuur en natievorming in de negentiende eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2008), 19-20; Petiet, 'Een voldingend bewijs van ware vaderlandsliefde'; Jensen, 'De gouden eeuw als ijkpunt van nationale identiteit', 161-5. In some cases the eighteenth century is described as a 'prequel'. Wiskerke, *De waardering voor de zeventiende-eeuwse literatuur tussen 1780 en 1813*, chapters 1 and 2.
  11. 'Het is moeilijk voor te stellen dat er rond 1800 nog geen enkele chronologische overzichtsgeschiedenis van de Nederlandstalige letterkunde verschenen was en er dus onder de geschoolde burgerij nauwelijks besef was van de ontwikkelingen van de literatuur'; '[b]esef van een doorgaande lijn, waarbij het ene genre zich ontwikkelt uit het andere en waarbij schrijvers reageren op hun voorgangers'. Marita Mathijssen, *Historiezucht. De obsessie met het verleden in de negentiende eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2013), 183.
  12. 'Pas als de teksten en hun schrijvers niet meer als losstaande verschijnselen gezien worden, maar geplaatst worden in een *chain of being*, kan er geschiedenis geschreven worden, canonvorming op gang komen en gestreefd worden naar behoud van het verleden door bijvoorbeeld edities of verzamelde werken te vervaardigen'. *Ibid.*, 185.
  13. Joan DeJean, 'Classical Reeduction: Decanonizing the Feminine', *Yale French Studies* 75 (1988), 26-39, at 26.
  14. 'om allerlei teksten die op de een of andere manier, in verschillende kaders en om verschillende redenen de lezers op de hoogte willen brengen van literaire gegevens uit het verleden'. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Rhetorica van onderzoek*, 11.
  15. See for more elaborate accounts on biographical practises in the early modern Dutch Republic: A.J.E. Harmsen, 'Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Biographies of Dutch Poets', in K. Enenkel, B. de Jong-Crane & P. Liebrechts, *Modelling the Individual. Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance* (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998), 217-41; Henk Duits, 'De levens der doorluchtige poëeten. Observaties van de zeventiende-eeuwse schrijversbiografie', *Voortgang* 12 (1991), 121-50; Henk Duits, 'De levens der doorluchtige poëeten ii. Kanttekeningen bij Geeraardt Brandts biografieën van Hooft en Vondel', *Voortgang* 13 (1992), 91-120; Gijsbert Rutten, 'De biograaf gebiografeerd. De vele levens van David van Hoogstraten (1659-1724)', *Voortgang* 23 (2005), 145-76.
  16. J.L. Price, *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 244-61.
  17. 'Die nutter Pronkgraf bouwt dan 't Mauzoléum was'. Pieter Langendijk, 'Op het Panpoëticon Batavum, Kabinet der voornaamste Nederlandsche

- Dichteren, in Vaerzen beschreven Door den Heere Lambert Bidloo', in Lambert Bidloo, *Panpoëticon Batavûm, kabinet, waar in de afbeeldingen van voornaame Nederlandsche dichteren, verzameld, en konstig geschilderd door Arnoud van Halen, en onder uytbreyding, en aanmerkingen, over de Hollandsche Rymkunst* (Amsterdam: Andries van Damme, 1720), [\*4v].
18. 'Den Tempel der Geheugenisse'. Balthasar Huydecoper, *Panpoëticon Batavûm. Kabinet van meest alle de Nederlandsche Dichteren, konstig geschilderd door den Heer Arnoud van Halen* (Amsterdam: Johannes Oosterwyk, 1723), [a4v].
  19. P.J.J. van Thiel, 'Christoffel Lubienietski's portret van Arnoud van Halen, de stichter van het Kabinet der Voornaamste Nederlandsche Dichteren en of Panpoëticon batavum', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 26 (1978)1, 11-26, at 24.
  20. 'Familiegraf van een doodvervelende rijmelarij'. Gerard Brom, *Geschiedschrijvers van onze letterkunde* (Amsterdam: Elzevier, 1941), 9-10.
  21. 'het valt niet te ontkennen dat het gedicht soms tekenen vertoont van het ongeremde gebabbel van een oude heer'. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Rhetorica van onderzoek*, 15.
  22. René van Stipriaan, *Het volle leven. Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur ten tijde van de Republiek* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2001), 263-7.
  23. Leemans & Johannes, *Worm en donder*, 111-2.
  24. De Vries, *Beschaven!*, 36; Ton van Strien, 'De schatkist. Lambert Bidloo's Panpoëticon Batavûm', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 130/3 (2014), 237-60. For an annotated summary of Bidloo's *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, see the annex of this article: Lieke van Deinsen & Ton van Strien, 'Lambert Bidloo, Panpoëticon Batavûm (1720). Samenvatting met annotaties' [digital edition: [www.tntl.nl/addenda/Add\\_VanStrien\\_2014\\_130\\_3.pdf](http://www.tntl.nl/addenda/Add_VanStrien_2014_130_3.pdf)].
  25. See for the introduction of the term 'National thought', Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).
  26. Linda Klinger Aleci, 'Images of Identity. Italian Portrait Collections of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', Nicholas Mann & Lyke Syson (eds.), *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance* (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 67-90, at 71.
  27. See for an elaborate account on the act of viewing portraits and the formation of identities: Ann Jensen Adams, *Public faces and private identities in seventeenth-century Holland: portraiture and the production of community* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009).
  28. Lorainne Daston, 'The Factual Sensibility', *Iris* 79 (1988), 452-67.
  29. Huydecoper, *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, 15.
  30. "'t leeven lichter stelden/ Dan eer en pligt en dierbaar vaderland'. Huydecoper, *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, 3.
  31. 'Had Vrankryks Gaston regt zyn hoogmoed aan te zetten,/ Op het vermaar bezit van zyn Muntkabinetten?/ Was hij roemruchtig op dien onwaerdeerbren schat/ Van tronibeelden, in de fransche waereldstad?/ Met welk een

- glory moet *De Roode* dan niet praalen?/ Nu Gastons puikstuk 't hoofd geheel moet onderhaalen/ Voor 't Dichterkunstpaleis, nu door zijn vlijt hersticht:/ Daar de afgestorvenen herleven in het licht,/ De levende zig zelf vereeuwigd zien'. Hendrik van Bracht, 'Op het Pan Poëticon Batavûm, aangelegd door den heer Arnoud van Halen, en na deszelfs overlijden opgebouwd door den heer Michiel de Roode', in *Arnoud van Halen's Pan Poëticon Batavûm verheerlijkt door lofdichten en bijschriften* (Leiden: Voor het Genootschap, 1773), 217-8.
32. 'om hunne wetenschap in Geleerdheyd, en voornamentlyk poësy alhier tot Hoog-Leeraars, en andere Ampten gevorderd, Verhollanderd, en, zoo men zegt, genatuurlijk zyn; van welk een Landaart'. Bidloo, *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, [\*3r].
  33. Ibid., [\*3v], 14 and 79.
  34. Ibid., 1.
  35. Pieter de la Ruë, *Mengeling van Aantekeningen over Zaaken en gevallen van verscheiden aart*, [UBA, XIV G 1-5], 3, 12, 10-1.
  36. 'keurlijke rariteit ... wel verdiende gezien te worden'. Ibid., 3, 12, 10.
  37. 'der voornaamste thans levende digteren, als Huydecoper, Boon, Hoogvliet, Schim, Feitama, enz.' Ibid., 3, 12, 10.
  38. 'Daar [...] het Genootschap dezen schat niet blotelyk om zig zelve[n] heeft eigen gemaakt, maar veel eer om de namen en verdiensten van beroemde Mannen des te beter voor de vergetelheid te bewaren, laat men het den Liefhebberen en Konstminnaren aan geen gelegenheid ontbreken om dit konstbaar en bezienswaardig Stuk te beschouwen; kunnende een ieder, des begerig, en die zig slegts hier toe by één der Bestuurderen aanmeld, gereden toegang tot het zelve verkrygen'. *Algemeene kunst- en letterbode* (1790, January-July), 203.
  39. J.J. Björnsthål, *Reize door Europa en het Oosten. Vijfde deel. Bevattende het dagboek der reize door zwitserland, Duitschland, Holland en Engelland* (Utrecht and Amsterdam 1783), 395. For an account of the visite of Björnsthål to Dutch book collectors during his stay in the Republic, see: Piet Buijnsters, 'J.J. Björnsthål's bezoek aan Nederlandse boekverzamelaars in 1774/1775', *De Achttiende Eeuw* 34/35 (1977), 65-84.
  40. 'Het konstlief oog, gestreeld in aller Dichtren Tempel,/ Daar hunne Beelden door 't penceel zijn afgemaakt;/ Doet nog mijne aandacht als verrukt staan op den drempel;/ In twijfel, wie den prijs des Lauwerkrans behaalt'. Hendrik Post, 'Loffer, toegewijd aan het Pan Poëticon Batavûm', *Arnoud van Halen's Pan Poëticon Batavûm*, 70.
  41. Huydecoper, *Panpoëticon Batavûm*, [a4v].
  42. 'Daar mag ik, na hun doot, hun loflijk beeld aanschouwen./ Daar mag ik mij met Hooft en Vondel onderhouden./ Daar lacht mij 't wezen toe van grooten Konstantijn./ Daar blinkt Antonides in heuchelijken schijn,/ Met andere Fenixen van vroege en latere jaren.' N.N., 'Kunstkroon voor den heere Arnoud van Halen', *Arnoud van Halen's Pan Poëticon Batavûm*, 23.

43. 'Ansloos Geest my strekte een aangename gast,/ Ter Noen- en Avond-maal'. Bidloo, *Panpoëticon Batavum*, 128.
44. 'Zy leeven hier, zelfs na hun dood' and 'daar hun mond/ Zelfs, na hun dood, nog schijnt te spreken,/ En 't lijf ter grafzerk uit komt breeken,/ Als of het leevend voor ons stond'. I.V.V., 'Aan den heere Arnoud van Halen, op zijn Eds. Konstkabinet Der Afbeeldingen van de Hollandsche Digtters', *Arnoud van Halen's Pan Poëticon Batavum*, 28-30.
45. 'Behalve eene groote schade aan alle de vertrekken, is de fraaije gehoorzaal geheel onbruikbaar geworden, het levensgrootte beeld van Apollo is ter nederGESLAGEN en verpletterd: het *Pan Poëticum* vergruisd, de uitmuntend gelijkende beeltenissen der Dichters beschadigd, en alom verstrooid ... – misschien het geheel voor altijd verwoest'. Jan Roemer, *Leyden in hare ramp, op den 12 Januarij 1807* (Leiden: de gebroeders Murray, Herdingh & Du Mortier, 1807), 91.
46. 'zeer mediocre Kopijën' which 'alleenlijk ... van één grootte zijn en omdat ze in Laadjes in een Kabinetje passen en weggesloten kunnen worden'. Letter of C.S. Roos to the Director-General of Sciences and Arts J. Meerman d.d. 15<sup>th</sup> August 1809, *Copy-boek 1809-1810* (Archive Rijksmuseum), 5-6. Quoted in P.J.J. van Thiel, 'Christoffel Lubienietzki's portret van Arnoud van Halen, de stichter van het Kabinet der Voornaamste Nederlandsche Dichteren en of Panpoëticon batavum', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 26 (1978)1, 11-26, at 13.
47. *Catalogus van eene fraaije verzameling van schilderijen, door Nederlandsche meesters; voorts van het alomberoemde Pan Poëticon Batavum, of Verzameling van drie honderd en vijftig geschilderde Portretten der eerste Dichters, Dichteressen en Geleerden van ons Vaderland ... Al hetwelk verkocht zal worden op Donderdag den 9den April 1818 ... Door de makelaar: Cornelis Sebillé Roos, Jeronimo de Vries en Albertus Brondgeest* (Amsterdam: B.J. Crajenschot & G. Lamberts, 1818).



## 14 Emergent Nationalism in European Maps of the Eighteenth Century<sup>1</sup>

*Michael Wintle*

There is no single definition of nationalism, but many of them hold it to be an ideology or even doctrine which makes the nation paramount and which implies a national identity based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic lines. The nation is seen to be the most natural and valid collectivity of humans beyond the family, and it should therefore be incorporated when possible in a sovereign political unit, the nation-state.<sup>2</sup> The nation-state supported by cultural nationalism is a phenomenon associated primarily with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (although of course there were precursors aplenty). The question which will be addressed here is what form nationalism took in the Enlightenment, from about 1650 to 1800, and how it interacted with developments in cartography. Benedict Anderson remarked that modern nationalism grew up only when the old certainties like revealed religion and royal divine right dissolved, towards the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In general, then, in the Enlightenment we are looking not so much at modern populist nationalism, but the popularised, later phases of state formation. The state was being imposed, and the support of the people of the nation was being sought, rather than simply the endorsement of the monarch. And from the seventeenth century onwards, the state frequently employed cartography as a material assistance to state formation.<sup>4</sup> That, in turn, gave considerable opportunity for airing the subject of the *nation* in cartographic form.

### Nationalism in and on Maps

Maps have often been harnessed for nationalist ends at various stages in history. Cartography has been particularly associated with the assertion of national unity at the expense of diversity within, with the declaration of a state's territorial ambitions vis-à-vis another's, and with the claims of empire. In the words of G.H. Herb, 'Surveying is an act of national hegemony', and 'only maps are able to communicate a precise image of a nation and foster a territorial consensus'.<sup>5</sup> Ricardo Padrón expressed it as follows: the ideological force of cartography 'ground[s] the authority,



even the identity, of nations and empires alike in maps of their territories or their territorial ambitions'.<sup>6</sup> In examining the impact of English atlases of the eighteenth century, Brian Harley remarked on the power of maps to reinforce and structure existing and aspiring power relationships,<sup>7</sup> while Mark Monmonier noted how generally important maps are to political propaganda for nationhood.<sup>8</sup> Christian Jacob called the map on the wall 'the visual glue of a sense of national identity', and asserted that the mastery of space through maps 'probably constitutes an essential stage in the process of acculturation of the individual in the formation of ... a national identity'.<sup>9</sup> Maps have been employed to focus early forms of national loyalty since the sixteenth century at least, and not only by the state: the Jacobite movement in the early eighteenth century regularly used maps of Great Britain in its campaign for Stuart reinstatement.<sup>10</sup> Cartography can perform a 'nationalisation function' by standardising locations in the map, and in charting both physical and human geography at the same time the map can unite a population with its natural surroundings (such as German forests, or maritime England) to express the nation. Maps, therefore, can 'have the power to transform discourses of national identity'.<sup>11</sup>

An obvious early example of this nationalism by means of cartography would be the famous *Leo Belgicus*, or lion in the shape of the Low Countries (the Seventeen Provinces), in their struggle against the tyrant Spain. It was in print in various forms from 1579 well into the eighteenth century, and represented 'an image of a nation'.<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that the lion could be facing either left or right, and that its vague and changing boundaries demanded a considerable suspension of disbelief, there is no arguing with the power of the image to draw together scattered feelings of territorial nationhood, and indeed to stimulate further ones. Such feelings of unity in the Seventeen Provinces of the Southern and Northern Netherlands were indeed necessary in the early stages of the Dutch Revolt against Spain, and then in the Eighty Years' War which finally delivered a modern Dutch state of just seven northern provinces and their dependencies in 1648. The community was indisputably imagined rather than actual, but the *Leo Belgicus* maps were indubitably of assistance to the required imagination.

A seminal study on the functions of cartography in the consolidation and indeed generation of early feelings of national identity was Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood*,<sup>13</sup> in which he traced the spatial visualisation of England in various narratives, including maps and atlases of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, principally those by Saxton, Drayton and Camden. He was able to demonstrate a moving away in cartographic treatments from a state envisaged in terms of the monarch, as

emblematic of the nation, towards a conception in which the personification of Britannia, as representative of the nation, stood for a loyalty to the land and landscape of the country and people, as opposed to a fealty towards a dynasty. This was aptly illustrated in the contrast between two images symbolising Britain. One was the renowned painting of Queen Elizabeth I by Marcus Gheerarts the Younger, known as the Ditchley portrait, c. 1592, to commemorate a royal visit to Sir Henry Lee at his country house, Ditchley Park, near Oxford. She is shown actually standing on a map of England, with her feet in Oxfordshire, linking her inseparably with the territory of her kingdom.<sup>14</sup> This can be contrasted with the frontispiece a few years later of the 1607 and many subsequent editions of William Camden's *Britannia*;<sup>15</sup> there one sees a central map of the British Isles, flanked on the left by the figure of Neptune and on the right by the personification of Britannia, with not a monarch in sight. Here the association is between the nation and the territory, rather than the monarch and the territory. Helgerson's work was influential in persuading scholars of national identity and indeed of literature to pay attention to the discursive role of the visual and especially the cartographic media in 'writing the nation'. He was careful to point out that, in the seventeenth century at least, neither France nor the Low Countries shared this particular trend. The Dutch were feeding a nascent bourgeois republicanism, while French maps continued to be an ode to the emblem of the state in the form of the monarch.<sup>16</sup> A fine map of Paris dating from 1652 by Jacques Gomboust is an example of this reverence for royalty as the embodiment of the country and its capital: the dedication, the marginal illustration and the representation in general all play to the glory of Louis XIV as the embodiment of France.<sup>17</sup> Were these different forms of cartographic nation-building still current in the long eighteenth century? Certainly later on, in the nineteenth century, maps were used to help imagine or even create the nations: historical maps were employed to show their evolution, and the map of the nation could be a powerful visual agent in nationalist propaganda.<sup>18</sup> But what happened in the Enlightenment?

In applying deconstructionist principles to the cartography of the eighteenth century, Brian Harley asserted that maps of the European states 'served still as a symbolic shorthand for nationalist ideas'.<sup>19</sup> There were new conditions pertaining in Europe in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century. States were taking on new forms: bureaucrats, enclosing landlords, soldiers and colonisers all wanted maps for their various purposes. The business of making and selling maps was, more than ever, governed by factors of supply and especially demand in the cartographic marketplace; that demand generally increased, particularly from the

political, the military, the landowning and the fiscal authorities.<sup>20</sup> In the eighteenth century there was a general tendency towards order, uniform classification systems and the application of science, and that held true for mapping as well.<sup>21</sup> How did the relationship between cartography and emergent nationalism, modern or otherwise, fare under these changing conditions?

## State-Sponsored Cartographic Surveys

The major change was the continuing emergence of stronger, more centralised states that wanted more recorded information about both their internal and external affairs. There was a rising demand for clarity with regard to geographical borders, especially after wars or other international disputes. The Treaty of Rijswijk of 1697 traced the agreed borders on appended maps, and the Peace of Paris of 1783 between the United States and Great Britain included a map of the agreed border between the US and Canada.<sup>22</sup> A 1784 map of the United States provided what was needed: 'a nation with a map'.<sup>23</sup> Probably the most obvious new form of cartography during the Enlightenment that affected the nation and national feeling was the new, national triangulation survey. Colbert had made active use of maps in his administration since the 1660s, and it was the highly centralised French state that led the way, with the labours of three generations of the Italo-French Cassini family, beginning with the patriarch, Jean Dominique Cassini (1625-1712); they were more or less fully sponsored by the state. Between 1740 and 1783 they completed a virtual 'reformation of cartography in France', based on systematic triangulation and accurate longitude. But there was also a political impact: the maps provided an image of the country which was 'more integrated and centralised than was the reality'. 'The eighteenth century was fascinated with accuracy', and the increased visual precision of French perceptions of the territory of the state – the hexagon – in the Cassini series of cartographic surveys tended to diminish regional differences in the interests of national unity, and thus assisted from the centre the 'diffusion of power': this was cartography helping to 'build' the state and the nation.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly the 'military and civil value of the maps on the Cassini pattern was soon recognised by other European rulers'.<sup>25</sup> These great surveys created an unprecedentedly accurate image of the state, in which the nation could imagine its territoriality. In the wake of the French, the Austrians followed suit in Bohemia and the Southern Netherlands, while Tsar Peter the Great took on the Delisle brothers in Russia to produce a

great *Atlas Russicus* in 1745 of nineteen regional maps. In Britain a number of grand-scale, accurate surveys were undertaken in the eighteenth century, including military ones, which foreshadowed the establishment of the Ordnance Survey in 1791. Sweden, Denmark and Norway were fully surveyed in the course of the century, and Switzerland had its own *Atlas Suisse* published in 1796-1802. The German territories and the United Provinces were also included in this Europe-wide development in cartography.<sup>26</sup>

The Napoleonic state embraced the ideology of the information-packed national survey, which resulted in the introduction of the *Cadaastre*, or topographical land registry for the purposes of taxation, in most of the satellite states: highly detailed surveys were launched, laboriously carried out, and then completed in the early part of the nineteenth century, for example in the Netherlands by 1832. These surveys were undoubtedly in the first place functions of state-building, responding to the needs of new-style, highly centralised governments which needed to visualise and assess everything within, alongside and over their boundaries for the purposes of taxation, civil and military security, the law and governance. At the same time the resulting publications, unique in their completeness, detail, accuracy and comparability across regions, allowed a visualisation of the state in which the nation could project itself with unparalleled clarity.

A number of examples serve to make the point. In Scotland, a series of surveys in the eighteenth century and right up to 1830, made in the first place for military purposes, allowed the visualisation of the Scottish nation in a context of 'geography, Enlightenment, and the public sphere'; it was further developed in the familiar direction of cultural nationalism in the early nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> In Russia, Peter the Great was a great patron and utiliser of cartography; his capture of the fortress of Azov in 1696 and potential access to the Black Sea was commemorated in a new map of those parts just five years later. In a campaign to 'civilise' Russia he turned Muscovy towards Europe rather than Asia, establishing for the first time the Ural Mountains as the border between the continents, and thus including his Western Muscovy, with its new capital in St. Petersburg on the Baltic, at the heart of Russia but nonetheless firmly and irretrievably within Europe. In a 1695 edition of a world map by Nicolas Sanson, Muscovy had occupied a kind of no man's land between Europe and Asia, while Tartary (the eastern reaches of the empire) was definitely placed in Asia.

That changing geopolitics of Russia can be seen on a map of Europe by one of the Delisle brothers, Guillaume (1675-1726), published in Paris



Figure 14.1 Guillaume Delisle, Map of Europe (Paris, 1700).<sup>28</sup>

in 1700 (Figure 1); it also illustrates some national thinking at the time. Italy and Germany are shown with distinct boundaries as single entities, or nations; Ireland is given its own identity, aided by separate colouring, and there is a most interesting, apparently British, enclave in northern France. As far as Russia is concerned, Delisle split Muscovy into a western and eastern part, while a map of 1712 by Adam Zürner relabelled Tartary as Siberia, which became the general usage.<sup>29</sup> The use of these new Enlightenment maps of Russia, fostered by Tsar Peter the Great, rearranged the spatial manifestation of Russia from an extra-European identity to a Europe-facing, 'civilised' country with European culture and orientation. The nation of Russia had abandoned Tartary, prevaricated over Muscovy and embraced Europe, switching its gaze from East to West in a few short decades, not least as the effect of managed trends in cartographic practice.

The German lands were also an interesting case. In the nineteenth century, of course, unification of a large part of the German-speaking principalities (expressly excluding Austria) under the leadership of Bismarck would be achieved, ably assisted by maps composed to that agenda. In the period of the Enlightenment, however, the myriad states were nominally independent, many of them linked into the Habsburg-dominated Holy

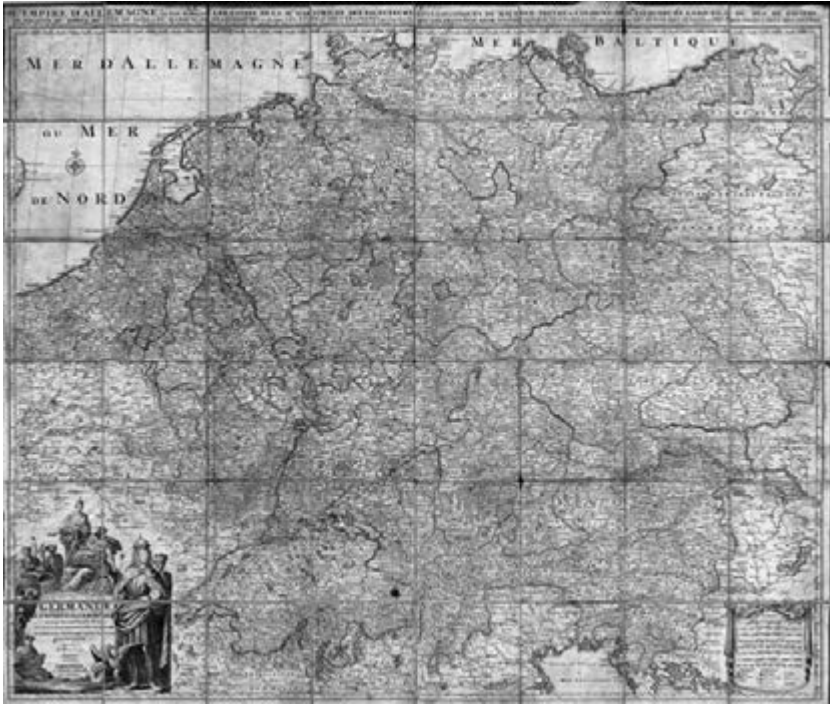


Figure 14.2 'Germaniae. L'Empire d'Allemagne' (Amsterdam, J. Covens and C. Mortier, c. 1715).<sup>30</sup>

Roman Empire. A map of 'Germany', published by Covens and Mortier of Amsterdam in about 1715, is shown in Figure 2. According to the cartouche at the bottom left it clearly wants to show the 'German Empire', though it also includes large parts of the Low Countries, France, Poland, the Czech lands, and much else. The title indicates the problem, and reads as follows: 'Germaniae. L'Empire d'Allemagne distingué suivant l'étendue tous les estats, principautés et souverainetés qui passent ou qui ont passé jusque a present sous le nom d'Allemagne'. Every political unit which passes or has passed under the sign of Germany: there was no country, but there was at least potentially a nation. Although the cartouche and title evidently refer to the totality of the German nation, the borders between the various statelets and principalities were still clearly shown: nationalism may have been the aspiration in the cartouche, but was not yet manifested on the map. Maps well up to the end of the eighteenth century continued to show the many German states, but more and more maps of Europe tended to demonstrate a new Europe of the emergent nation-states, headed by France and England, but with Germany and the Austrian empire increasingly being shown as single units.<sup>31</sup>



## Empire

European nations also sought to assert their national pride and qualities in maps of other parts of the world where they had influence and therefore an opportunity to express their cultural nationalism. Increased accuracy and improved surveying methods meant that scientific authority could be expressed through maps in support of national claims abroad, especially in the North American colonies from the 1680s onwards.<sup>32</sup> Colonial maps of North America showed the territory as empty, and therefore ripe for the taking by the nations of Europe.<sup>33</sup> The process of Othering, or defining one's own (national) identity by making observations about alterity, or the Other, was widespread in the mapping of the colonial areas of the world. In the Indian subcontinent, Britain's cartographic activities in the eighteenth century were not only extensive, bolstering imperial administration and control, but they also asserted the national identity by imposing order and science on the unruly Indian landscape, replete with symbols of British national identity.

Figure 3 shows James Rennell's Map of Hindustan, of 1782. This is imperial cartography asserting the nation as personified by the female Britannia figure, shown dispensing law and establishing hierarchies in India. She is offered a scroll of Hindu sacred law by local elites, but soldiers indicate the great battles named on the stonework in commemoration of her triumphs by force of arms. Military prowess, the British lion dominating the globe, excellence in the arts and technology, merchant shipping, global trade including the opium business (poppies in the wreath at the top), and much more is represented in the imagery here: it is the nation asserting itself in its burgeoning empire before our eyes.<sup>34</sup>

An equally cogent example was General Bonaparte's expedition of 1798-99 to Egypt. It was a strategic, anti-British operation in the first place, designed to challenge Britain's colonial pre-eminence, but he was also careful to take with him a great company of specialists in various non-military fields, such as natural science, political economy, public administration, map-making, and so on. The operation was not simply a military one: it was a civilisation offensive (to purloin a term generally used of later, Victorian bourgeois initiatives), designed to impose French rational, scientific order on Oriental chaos, much as the British had been doing in India. The perceived national values of good governance, prosperity, law, science and the arts were being exported in a form of cultural imperialism which would characterise many of the later imperialist regimes. French national virtues were being celebrated, set against the rich but chaotic, external, Egyptian, Oriental Other.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 14.3 James Rennell, Map of Hindoostan, 1782, detail of the cartouche, illustrated at Goss, *The Mapmaker's Art* (see note 26), plate 7.16 opposite p. 251.

Finally, there were also changes in maps induced by variations in fashions, trends and taste, and some of those alterations had effects on the way in which national feelings were or could be portrayed. For example, it began to be popular in the eighteenth century to use colours to link countries together in a thematic way: all the territories owing allegiance



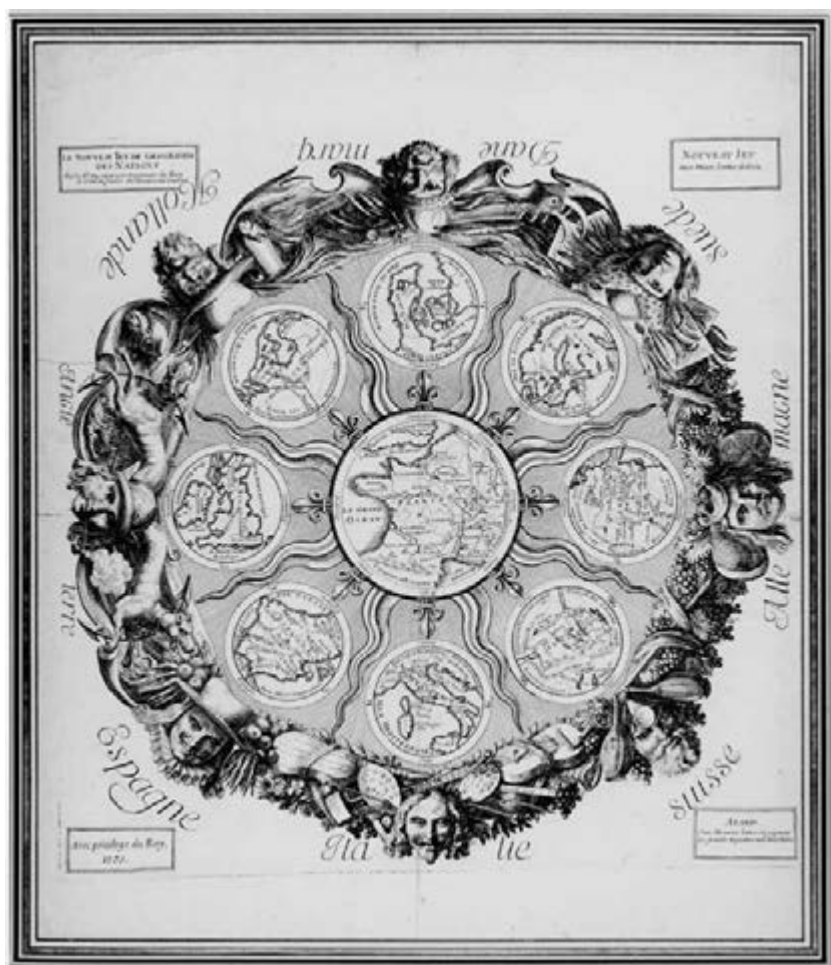


Figure 14.4 'Le nouveau jeu de geographie des nations', designed by Charles-Francois-Henry Desmartins, engraved by Pierre Brissart, published by A.H. Jaillot, 1675.<sup>37</sup>

to one monarch might be coloured the same.<sup>36</sup> Fads in the education of children could also be important: using maps to teach geography as a kind of game was well-known in seventeenth-century France, and it caught on in England on a major scale in the second half of the eighteenth century.

A fine example, shown in Figure 4, of these geographical board games from France in 1675 was titled 'Le nouveau jeu de geographie des nations', and published by the renowned cartographer Alexis-Hubert Jaillot (c. 1632-1712). The map-game is circular, and probably was played with a dice; it had eight segments showing maps and ornate personifications of the

major 'nations' of Europe, with the first nation, France (self-evidently) in the central bullseye. There is clearly a national theme. Italy has no internal borders and is characterised by artistic accoutrements; England is portrayed by a country gentleman or yeoman with some vicious-looking hunting dogs and a naval anchor; Holland is seen as a bucolic type surrounded by a jug and glasses, a rabbit and a monkey; Denmark is distinctly martial; Switzerland is a soldier in a vineyard; Sweden is all fur and fish; while Germany is represented as a single national unit by oaks, apples and grapes. Centrally placed France is simply a clear map of the hexagon. Countries and their characteristics are featured here: national thought is evidently under way.

Many of the early board games which followed the craze in England in the second half of the eighteenth century were made in the form of printed maps of the British Isles, like John Wallis's 1794 'Tour through England and Wales: a New Geographical Pastime', which allowed children (of all ages) to follow a route around the territorialised nation, visualising the national geography from a young age.<sup>38</sup> The map would be laid out on a table, the players each had a marker and some counters, and there was some kind of dice or spinner. More than a hundred spaces could be 'landed on' (as in Monopoly or other more recent forms), with advantages or penalties for the various locations, designed to increase geographical knowledge – and geopolitical awareness – of England and Wales (shipwreck on the Isle of Man, prosperity in the industrial towns). Wallis was an energetic entrepreneur at his premises in Ludgate Street in London, and produced many such games, including similar ones based on the whole world or parts of it, and one of Europe (in 1802), which allowed players to travel with their counters around the countries of Europe, picking up some geographical knowledge in the form of a notion of territorially bounded states or nations.<sup>39</sup>

Another producer of map-games of this kind was the English cartographer John Spilsbury (1739–69), who may well actually have been the inventor of the jigsaw puzzle. Figure 5 shows his jigsaw map of Europe (there were equivalents for three other continents), which was designed as a geography teaching aid.<sup>40</sup> The jigsaw versions of these maps are particularly illuminating, because they seem to indicate which the most natural units were seen to be; one piece for each nation, for example, despite the fact that several of the 'nations' were not yet politically formed, in this case in 1766–7. Minimum size needs to be borne in mind of course; it was simply not practical to make a separate piece for a city-state. But the jigsaw is revealing about incipient national thought. 'Europe Divided into its Kingdoms' permitted the pupil to



Figure 14.5 John Spilsbury, map of 'Europe Divided into its Kingdoms' as a jigsaw, 1766-7. British Library, Maps 188.v.12.<sup>41</sup>

detach each kingdom as a single piece. Interestingly from the point of view of nationalism on this map of 1766, Italy would not become a single political entity until 1861 at least, and only in 1815 would the Northern and Southern Netherlands be joined or rejoined as a single state, whereas both are here pasted onto a single jigsaw piece. For Scotland, however, there was a piece separate from England and Wales, as there was for Ireland. The consistency of the geography is not the point: it is the suggestion that certain nations form states or kingdoms that was the invitation and encouragement to think in national and even nationalist terms.

Not only in jigsaws was this geography lesson in nationalism perpetrated: embroidery samplers were also marshalled into the service of educating the (female) youth of the day. These samplers could be designed around a single nation, or a continent, like Europe. The outlines were printed, usually on silk or satin, and sold to be embroidered as practice pieces or samplers. For example, one from England at the end of eighteenth century, probably the



Figure 14.6 Oval map embroidery sampler, English, late 18<sup>th</sup> century, showing map of Europe.  
© Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. T.142-1938.

1780s, is shown in Figure 6; it is an oval template showing a map of Europe. Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland were shown as separate, undivided territories, which in the late eighteenth century would not have accorded with the views of the crowned heads and their ministers; the British Isles, however, were divided into Scotland, England and Ireland.<sup>42</sup> (In passing we might also notice that Europe itself is sharply defined, splitting countries like Turkey and Russia right down the middle.) Not all such samplers were the same, and some reflected more complex, non-national situations, but a discourse was taking place in these cartographic forms created by new markets at government, landlord and consumer level, which enabled and indeed encouraged the consideration of nationalist feelings of loyalty, and their visual territorialisation.

## Visualising the Nation

There is little doubt that cartography was in the service of the *state* during the Enlightenment period: it had been at least since the sixteenth century. The systematic way in which such service was commissioned and provided in much of the eighteenth century led to a major increase in accuracy and reliability, and an emphasis on objectified territory rather than simply an allegiance to a dynasty or a religious figurehead. This could add to the weakness of a dynastic state like the Holy Roman Empire, which would indeed be finally abolished in 1806 at the hands of Napoleon. Many of the developments were products of and a support for the evolving state within Europe, but they also allowed the subject of the nation to be aired, discussed and contested.<sup>43</sup> Truly modern, Romantic, cultural nationalism might have to wait for the nineteenth century, but its early forms were active in Europe throughout the modern period, and especially in the age of Enlightenment, leaving room for the visualisation of the nation as a people in a territory, in the cartographic forms of the long eighteenth century.

## Notes

1. This article is based on a shorter piece, 'Nationalism and Cartography', commissioned for M.H. Edney & M. Pedley (eds.), *Cartography in the European Enlightenment*, vol. IV of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in preparation). I am most grateful to the editors and publisher for permission to reproduce that material here. I am also grateful for the constructive comments made by colleagues when I presented parts of it at two conferences at Radboud University in Nijmegen, 'Europe and its Worlds' in Oct. 2013, and 'The Roots of Nationalism' in Jan. 2015.
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5. G.H. Herb and D.H. Kaplan (eds.), *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory and Scale* (Lanham Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 23-4.
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7. J.B. Harley, 'Power and Legitimation in the English Geographical Atlases of the Eighteenth Century', in J.A. Wolter and R.E. Grim (eds.), *Images of the*

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8. M. Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 88f.
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  10. P. Barber and C. Board, *Tales from the Map Room: Fact and Fiction about Maps and their Makers* (London: BBC Books, 1993), 78-9.
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  13. R. Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
  14. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, portrait of Elizabeth I, c. 1592, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG2561.
  15. William Camden, *Britannia siue Florentissimorum Regnorum Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae* (London, Bishop and Norton, 1607).
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  18. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 174-5.
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  20. M.S. Pedley, *The Commerce of Cartography: Making and Marketing Maps in Eighteenth-Century France and England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); J. Black, *Visions of the World: a History of Maps* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2003), 83-90.
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  26. J. Goss, *The Mapmaker's Art: a History of Cartography* (London: Studio Editions, 1993), 187-231.



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32. Black, *Visions of the World*, 78-9.
33. J.B. Harley, 'Power and Legitimation', 184-91.
34. M.E. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: the Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 12-5; M.J. Wintle, *The Image of Europe: Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography throughout the Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 333.
35. S. Woolf, 'The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years', *Past and Present* 137 (1992), 72-101; D.N. Livingstone and C.W.J. Withers (eds.), *Geography and Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 171; Wintle, *The Image of Europe*, 284.
36. Black, *Visions of the World*, 89.
37. 'Le nouveau jeu de géographie des nations', designed by Charles-François-Henry Desmartins, engraved by Pierre Brissart, published by A.H. Jaillot, 1675, etching and engraving; 662 x 591 mm; Waddesdon The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust; acc. no. 2669.1.7). Photo: Mike Fear © The National Trust Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, UK. By kind permission. See R. Jacobs, 'Playing, Learning, Flirting: Printed Board Games from 18th-Century France', handlist for exhibition Mar.-Oct. 2012 at Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury (UK), available at [www.waddesdon.org.uk/assets/PDFs/Exhibition%20pages/Board%20Games\\_b.pdf](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/assets/PDFs/Exhibition%20pages/Board%20Games_b.pdf) (consulted 9 Sept. 2013), 13-4. An extraordinary collection of these early board games is part of the Rothschild collections at Waddesdon Manor (UK).
38. B. Stone, 'Playing Games with Maps: John Wallis, *Tour Through England and Wales: A New Geographical Pastime* (London, 1794)', located in the Newberry Library, call number Map 4F G5751 A9 1794 W3; available at [www.newberry.org/smith/exhibits/maps/nations/exhibit1998.html](http://www.newberry.org/smith/exhibits/maps/nations/exhibit1998.html), consulted 10 Oct. 2006. There is also a copy of the 1794 England and Wales map in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London); for more detail see the website, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O26289/tour-through-england-and-wales-board-game-wallis-john/>, consulted 24 April 2015.
39. John Wallis, 'Wallis's Tour of Europe. A New Geographical Pastime' (London, 1802). The case which holds the map has a delightful coloured engraving.

ing of a personification of Europe on it, picking up on centuries of depicting the continents in a strict hierarchy, which began in the late sixteenth century. On this occasion, the empress of the world (Europe) has a crown and sceptre, rich robes, weapons for power, the true Christian church, books for wisdom, trade goods for commerce, scientific instruments for learning and musical ones for the arts. This and others are illustrated at [http://alteagallery.com/stock\\_detail.php?ref=12350](http://alteagallery.com/stock_detail.php?ref=12350); much more detail of these map-games is to be found at <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.nl/2009/08/puzzle-and-game-maps.html>, consulted 24 April 2015.

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**Part Five**  
Nation in the Age of Revolution



## 15 'Qu'allons-nous devenir?'

Belgian National Identity in the Age of Revolution

*Jane Judge*

'What have we been? What are we today?' Charles Lambert d'Outrepoint, lawyer for the *Conseil de Brabant*, asked his 'concitoyens' in a pamphlet he published in December 1789.<sup>1</sup> Calling himself 'un Belge', he posed critical identity questions that cut right to the heart of how a nation identifies itself. In that year, revolution raged through the Southern Netherlands, a group of ten independent provinces that were part of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>2</sup> The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) which had transferred the territories from Spanish to Austrian rule, stipulated that the provinces be considered as an inalienable unit.<sup>3</sup> Yet they strongly identified as independent from each other; each province had its own administration and its own sovereign, even if that sovereign were the same person. As d'Outrepoint wrote his pamphlet, nine of the ten provinces were securing their independence, successfully chasing Imperial troops and administrators from their borders with a patriot army. Indeed, just as he published the tract, members of the Estates-General were preparing to create a new federal state that would for the first time create an independent country composed of a political union of the provinces – to be called the United States of Belgium with a national Congress in Brussels.<sup>4</sup> Charles d'Outrepoint and his fellow *Belges* found themselves on the cusp of nation-building.

In the 1980s, social scientists declared nations the product of the nineteenth century, of modernity and mass-produced nationalisms as defined by the likes of Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and John Breuilly.<sup>5</sup> Many historians have written numerous excellent rebuttals to this notion in the decades since then. They have helped strengthen the case for nationhood, or at the very least, national consciousness before the nineteenth century. In particular, David Bell has argued that a 'cult of the nation' predated the nineteenth century, a crucial counterpoint to the modernists' paradigm. Importantly, though Bell's work focuses on the 'idea of the nation [that] emerged with particular strength and clarity in eighteenth-century France', he readily admits that 'it did not emerge in France alone: the eighteenth century saw the development of sentiments and movements that deserve the name "nationalist" throughout Europe'.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the revolutionaries that helped create the United States of Belgium in 1790 participated in a national movement as they sought to bind their provinces together in a

central state. In many ways, they mirrored some of the mechanisms of the French revolutionary period that Bell identifies, especially with regard to how they 'came to think of their nation as a political construct'.<sup>7</sup>

This paper examines the national consciousness that came about during the Belgian revolution via a selection of polemical pamphlets published between independence and the fall of the United States of Belgium in December 1790. The late Belgian historian Jean Stengers was the first to strongly advocate the idea that the eighteenth-century revolution marks the birth of a Belgian national consciousness. In *Les racines de la Belgique, jusqu'à la révolution de 1830*, the first volume of his *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique des origines à 1918*, he definitively labels 1789 as the moment Belgianness, as a national sentiment, became real. Johannes Koll finds the origins of this national identity even further back, roughly in the 1760s, though he supports the proposition that it was the revolution that solidified a national feeling.<sup>8</sup> Brecht Deseure, in a study that nuances the relationship between the French and their northern neighbours at the end of the eighteenth century, writes about the importance of a distinct, if disputed, Belgian history, which played an important role during French occupation after 1794.<sup>9</sup> My own work traces the origins of Belgian national feeling to the beginnings of protest against Joseph II's reform measures in 1787. Olivier Damme has produced an excellent statistical analysis of key words in the vast majority of the revolution-era pamphlets, comparing the number that indicated a national feeling to those that remained provincial. He convincingly shows that, over the course of the resistance and revolution, political rhetoric – both in the public sphere in pamphlet literature and in official communiqués between officials – shifted, increasingly dropping provincial emphasis in favour of adjectives like *belge* or *belgique* and images of a *nation*.<sup>10</sup> The pamphlets analysed below support this idea, and show that during the revolution Belgian national sentiment infused all sides of the revolution's political spectrum. By comparing pamphlets by writers from various political persuasions side by side, this article shows that national rhetoric crossed ideological lines. A national construction was useful to conservative and democratic revolutionaries alike as they made their case for governing an independent Belgian state.

## A Brief Sketch of The Revolution<sup>11</sup>

The eighteenth-century Belgian revolution began as corporate resistance to top-down reforms implemented by Joseph II of Austria. He had become sovereign of each of the independent provinces in 1780, when he had

assumed full control of the vast Habsburg Empire upon his mother, Maria Theresa's, death. In 1783, he began to implement ecclesiastical reforms, including abolishing many contemplative orders and mandating a single general seminary that would do away with diocesan training for priests; but it was not until 1787 that Joseph incurred the widespread indignation of his Netherlandish subjects. That year he announced a series of administrative reforms that would effectively nullify the provincial Estates and Councils, the centuries-old representative bodies tasked with governing the provinces and interceding on their behalf to the sovereign, including voting bi-annual taxes and approving legislation. Quickly, resistance mounted as the many lawyers for and members of the Estates and Councils petitioned the Governors-General in Brussels, the Emperor's sister Maria Christina and her husband Albert de Saxe-Teschen, Chancellor Kaunitz and the Emperor in Vienna. The Estates wrote the bulk of the *représentations* and *remonstrances*, as the petitions of grievances were called, though corporate bodies like guilds and ecclesiastical members also wrote to protest the measures.

Eventually, in April 1787, the resistance, which manifested in all of the provinces, coalesced around a *Mémoire* written by the Brabantine lawyer Henri Van der Noot, which systematically showed how each of Joseph's decrees violated Brabant's 'constitution', the *Joyeuse Entrée* or *Blijde Inkomst*. First secured in 1356, the *Joyeuse Entrée* stipulated the province's contractual relationship to each of its successive sovereigns. The other provinces did not have a comparable single, codified document to which their sovereigns swore an oath, but they did all possess treaties and charters that, over the years, had defined their relationships to their sovereigns and had been based in contractual language. Importantly, this meant that the provincial administrations were within their rights to terminate the relationship if the sovereign violated his or her oaths. Though the resistance remained independent within each province, by spring 1787 there were more voices calling for coordinated efforts among the provincial assemblies. In the beginning of July, the Brabantine Estates took up this cry. They sent a letter to the other Estates, offering the vision of a unified single 'Nation', of a 'Peuple Belgique' with a long and glorious past being brought to ruin by a tyrant.<sup>12</sup> The Brabantine Estates declared to their fellow Southern Netherlandish assemblies that it was time that the provinces threw their lot in together. They spoke of creating a 'union' and a 'coalition', and of the importance and necessity of doing so quickly. The seeds of political union were sown.

After the summer of 1787, resistance ebbed and flowed as some of Joseph's ministers tried to appease the revolutionaries while the Emperor stubbornly

insisted on continuing his policies. Henri Van der Noot fled into exile as some of his colleagues were arrested in mid-1788. From abroad, he petitioned the governments of the Triple Alliance (Britain, Prussia and the United Provinces) for help. Ultimately, he envisioned a scenario in which a new sovereign for the provinces could be found, not unlike the initial outcome of the Dutch Revolt of the sixteenth century. Van der Noot had little success, but he settled in Breda, just over the Brabantine border in the United Provinces, and continued to write letters to members of the Brabantine and other Estates. Then in 1789 Joseph galvanised resistance irreparably by voiding the *Joyeuse Entrée* and other provincial treaties and charters. This awakened an entirely new segment of the population: bourgeois lawyers, artisans, merchants and bankers who had agreed with some of his reforms but could no longer stomach 'tyrannical' measures; they would become an important democratic element in the revolution.<sup>13</sup> In the spring, several of these lawyers began to meet in the home of Jan Frans Vonck and in May 1789 he and his close colleague Jean-Baptiste Verlooy founded a secret society, *Pro Aris et Focis*, to quietly recruit patriotic inhabitants in the cities and countryside of the provinces to eventually rise up to fight imperial troops and undo the imperial administration. Their idea was to organise the villages and towns throughout the provinces into a concerted uprising while simultaneously marshalling a patriot army on the northwestern border; most importantly, they envisioned an independent country. As imagined by Verlooy, when the army marched into the provinces to confront Austrian troops, villagers and townspeople would stage their own uprising and the combined effort would ensure revolutionary victory and independence for the provinces.

Over the summer, *Pro Aris et Focis* was extremely successful. The society retained its secrecy well and recruited several thousand men for the patriot army.<sup>14</sup> Vonck enlisted the retired General André Van der Mersch to command the troops, who first drilled in the Bishopric of Liège before being forced to move into the United Provinces to avoid imperial troops. After a spy betrayed the leadership in Brussels, Vonck, Verlooy and the others fled. They eventually regrouped at Breda, where Van der Noot and his more conservative colleagues, who formed what they called 'the Breda Committee', were still working to secure international support. Vonck realised that a single authority for the revolution would be best, and in mid-October he finally convinced Van der Noot to combine the Breda Committee and *Pro Aris et Focis*.<sup>15</sup> Then, on 24 October 1789, the feast of the Archangel Raphael – a date suggested by the Abbots of Tongerlo and St. Bernard, who had helped secure funding for *Pro Aris et Focis* – the patriot army marched

into Brabant and then Flanders to meet Imperial troops. With the help of urban populations, the patriot army eventually achieved victory and on 18 December many conservative members of the Breda Committee, notably Henri Van der Noot and his secretary and close collaborator, the Canon Pierre Van Eupen, triumphantly marched through the streets of Brussels. The provincial Estates acted quickly to take up the deposed Emperor's sovereignty and to secure their position on the world stage through political union. After the liberation of Ghent, but before Brussels had been taken by the Patriots, the Estates of Flanders had sent an 'Acte d'Union' to their fellow Estates in Brabant, asking that the two bodies unite their fates. More than that, even, they suggested a 'souveraineté commune' between the two.<sup>16</sup> On 19 December, just over two weeks later, the Brabantine Estates responded positively, agreeing to politically bind the provinces together and create a new Congress which would oversee all communal issues including military matters. Van Eupen coordinated with the other provincial Estates to arrange a meeting of the Estates-General by the beginning of January, where they would approve a new Constitution for the United States of Belgium. The government only retained one member of *Pro Aris et Focis*, J.J. Torfs, whom they sent to Paris as an envoy. Vonck, Verlooy and the rest of their democratic colleagues were left out of the process entirely.

### *'Qu'allons-nous devenir?'*

After the initial military victory, and as the United States of Belgium was coming together through the efforts of Pierre Van Eupen and the provincial Estates, a flurry of pamphlets filled the public sphere. Democratic revolutionaries, left without government posts but determined to use pamphlet literature as a medium through which to remain relevant to the political process, wrote numerous tracts explaining their positions. Conservatives, usually supporters of the Estates and the new Congress, wrote other pamphlets and these often, though not exclusively, directly responded to the more democratic writings. Ultimately, pamphlet writers represented almost a full political spectrum (though royalists kept mostly quiet), emphasising the complexity and chaotic nature of the revolution after its initial moment of glory. In this way, the Belgian revolutionaries paralleled Swiss political activists, who also debated political changes and reforms in pamphlet literature during and after the 'Age of Revolution'. Marc H. Lerner, in his study of the political transformation in Switzerland between 1750 and 1848, asserts that these pamphlet debates showcase 'the variety



of political participation and the debates over differing understandings of liberty'.<sup>17</sup> The same is true of the Belgian pamphlets, which expressed a wide swathe of political opinions.

Contemporaries and historians characterised the revolution, and especially the year 1790, as one in which 'Vandernootists', 'traditionalists' or 'conservatives' opposed 'Vonckists' or 'democrats', and, while these divisions work in general, they were not crystal clear at the time.<sup>18</sup> Broadly speaking, the split was similar to the Swiss positions Lerner outlines, characterised by 'a major struggle between supporters of fundamentally different visions ...: those who sought a restoration of the supposedly timeless Old Confederation and those who embraced a mindset that defended the rights of individuals and egalitarian (male) conceptions of popular sovereignty'.<sup>19</sup> In the debates about how to govern the new Belgian state, pamphlets often crossed ideological lines or professed ideas which neither camp fundamentally supported. Most of the arguments revolved around ideas of governance and sovereignty, debating the best way to go forward now that the provinces had deposed the Emperor. Generally, those considered in the 'conservative' camp wanted very little change to government administration in the provinces; they accepted the Estates' appropriation of the sovereignty and authority Joseph II once held. 'Democrats' advocated revising the constitutions, broadening the franchise, and checking the power of the Estates. Partisans argued bitterly against each other, often personally attacking those who had written opposing pamphlets.

What is surprising, however, are the similarities one can find in the pamphlets, regardless of political philosophy. Irrespective of their goal or overall political message, conservatives and democrats used strikingly similar language. In the short time period between military victory and the infighting that would send many of the democrats into exile, foreshadowing the impending end of the Belgian independence experiment, these pamphlets offer a clear glimpse of the transition from regionalism and provincialism to a more 'national', that is to say 'Belgian', consciousness. The several pamphlets this paper analyses in detail offer a snapshot of this process, as writers of different political persuasions invoked similar images of a Belgian nation in arguing their points.<sup>20</sup>

## Democrats

Having been shut out of the political process, democratic sympathizers and revolutionaries took to pamphlets to disseminate their ideas. Many

of the revolutionary leaders – Jan Frans Vonck and Jean-Baptiste Verlooy, notably – wrote multiple tracts outlining their visions for the new Belgian state and for the course of the revolution more generally. Their pamphlets often reflected the views of their new *Société Patriotique*, a political club Verlooy and Vonck formed in Brussels in February 1790 in response to their exclusion from the Estates-General and Congress. Other members of *Pro Aris et Focis* and many anonymous democratic supporters added their voices to calls for reform of the constitutions. For most of these pamphlets, a key element to the success of the revolution and independence, regardless of the reforms they considered, was political unity among the provinces. One of the loudest voices that emerged in December 1789 was that of Charles Lambert d'Outrepoint, a lawyer for the *Conseil de Brabant* who had taken part in the early resistance as well.

D'Outrepoint's pamphlet above all stressed strength through unity, as he urged his *concitoyens* again and again to come together and create a strong Belgian state through a unified, powerful central government. Ultimately, he was contesting the Estates' right to claim sovereignty and create the United States of Belgium on their own. What he wanted was a constitution created by an independent body, crafted 'to give all the Belgian provinces a constitution that would tie them tightly to each other, and establish firm politics among them'.<sup>21</sup> Dutifully grounding his arguments in the past, d'Outrepoint described the Belgian people as historically 'doux, calme et froid', sober and ready to craft a balanced government, free of hot-headed passion.<sup>22</sup> While he conceded that the past had been a happy time for the provinces, secured through their sacred pacts with their sovereigns, he alerted his fellow citizens that the fortuitous success of deposing their sovereign now required them to reframe their government. Monarchy defined the old constitutions, which embodied feudal values that no longer reflected reality. Thus, a complete overhaul was necessary.

The most important change d'Outrepoint advocated was the creation of a new body akin to the recently created French *Assemblée Nationale*. He pleaded that such an assembly was 'nécessaire, indispensable' if the new state was to maintain political stability, particularly vis-à-vis the international stage.<sup>23</sup> His ideas struck a chord, as on 15 March 1790, the *Société Patriotique* sent a petition to Congress to ask them to consider reforms and call an assembly to independently establish a new government. Congress and the Estates-General responded by making it illegal for any clubs or societies to meet.<sup>24</sup> Importantly, however, d'Outrepoint's vision as written in his earlier pamphlet was not overly radical. Though he admitted his own preferences were for a new society, void of hierarchy or the tiered Estates system, he

stressed that the final outcome would depend on what the majority wanted, as expressed by delegates to a national convention that would craft the new constitution. D'Outrepont made an effort to intertwine tradition and innovation, confirming that one aspect to being Belgian in 1790 was respect for custom and precedent, even as one advocated for change.

What is most interesting about d'Outrepont's pamphlet is his nationalist rhetoric. No surprise in a pamphlet calling for a strong political unity, d'Outrepont's language nonetheless is remarkable in its reflection of the changing notions of sovereignty in the late eighteenth century. Though he made no direct references to them, his language often parallels that of the Dutch Patriots who had called for reforms to the stadholder system in the 1780s, many of whom emigrated to the Belgian provinces. Annie Jourdan, in her comparative study of French, Dutch and American revolutionaries, declares that the Dutch had 'updated in a continental European context the notions of self-government, actual representation, citizen militias and republican liberty'.<sup>25</sup> D'Outrepont demonstrated this. He spoke of natural rights, as well as of a government rooted in popular sovereignty:

Sovereignty belongs to the nation. He who used to enjoy it has lost its exercise, and this exercise, the nation has not [yet] confided to anyone. It is by a *national convention* that she must reappropriate these powers: let us hasten to seize the only way there is to render the exercise of supreme authority legitimate.<sup>26</sup>

The *Conseil's* lawyer clearly saw a Belgian nation, instilled with political authority and ready to harness its independence. Importantly, his national convention would override provincial patriotism. To leave the individual constitutions supremely sovereign would leave the new country too weak to repel foreign pressures. 'Only the union of our provinces, founded on the unity of their constitution, can be an efficient protector of our liberty', he assured his compatriots.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, d'Outrepont was not the only democrat – nor the only Belgian – to express such national sentiment in this way. In a favourable response to the Brabantine lawyer's pamphlet, Dr Vandeveld, a democratic partisan, took d'Outrepont's ideas even further. Published under a penname in Brussels on 2 January 1790, Vandeveld's pamphlet agreed with d'Outrepont that unity was key and that it was necessary to 'remind the Belgians of ... their national majesty'.<sup>28</sup> He pleaded with his audience to recognise the wisdom of d'Outrepont's ideas, and he urged the 'Belges' to remain brave in freeing themselves from the chains of tyranny. Unity would be their salvation:

It is indispensable that Brabantois, Flemish, Hennuiers, Limbourgeois, Luxembourgers, Tournaisiens, Gelderlanders, Namurians, Malinois, they form but one people, but one and indivisible national mass, *as soon as their internal and external security will have been sufficiently provided for*; and that the interest-become-general blends, *in the unity of a common constitution*, the particular interests of all provinces!<sup>29</sup>

No clearer indication of a Belgian sentiment could be written. Vandeveldé echoed the American revolutionaries in their calls for New Englanders, Virginians, Carolinians, New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians to come together to form a union. Just as the War for Independence helped produce an American identity, the revolution against Joseph II was bringing together the Southern Netherlands in a new way. Unity among them, unity of a Belgian people, would secure their happiness and security.

## Conservatives

The members of the Estates-General which met in Brussels to create the new Congress were, unsurprisingly, mostly conservative in their outlook. Just as in 1787, when Joseph had first decreed changes to the existing system, they had no intention of allowing their privileged positions to change. Pierre Van Eupen, secretary for the new United States of Belgium, wrote to their agent in London, the Chevalier De Roode, 'For our part, we have done the impossible in order to convince The People that nothing needs to be changed *chez nous*, that Walking in the footsteps of our Fathers, footsteps consecrated by so many centuries, we will shelter ourselves from the danger of young and inexperienced novelty'.<sup>30</sup> They wanted neither innovation nor novelty, and promulgated an unquestioned veneration of the past based on continuity. This became a cornerstone of the conservative vision, not only of the revolution and the new government, but also of what it meant to be a part of the new country.

Indeed, the conservative pamphlet literature emphasised adherence to the past. In a pamphlet that disputed those written by Vonck and Verlooy, the conservative lawyer and pamphleteer H.J. Van der Hoop insisted that only those who were loyal to the Estates and constitutions as they were in 1790 were 'vrai [sic] citoyens', that is: 'real' citizens.<sup>31</sup> Van der Hoop absolutely excluded the Vonckists, despite their patriotism, because their willingness to adapt the constitution was nothing short of traitorous. In fact, Van der Hoop specified that there was no reason to change the constitutions, even

if the sovereign had changed. The fact that there was no longer a monarchy meant little to him. Moreover, as he saw it, history and tradition supported his claims: 'Far from living under a *simple & limited Monarchy*, the *Belges* had always & originally inhabited *Republics*, or at least since they had begun to adopt mixed forms of government which different historians agree, conserved a republican *foundation* under a monarchical *form*'.<sup>32</sup> For Van der Hoop, the entire system did not need to be rearranged because one element – the type of executive sovereign – had been changed. Though it did not diminish his support for independence, Van der Hoop did not see Belgian identity as contingent on independence. The inhabitants were 'Belges' and always had been; a new constitution would not change that. Strikingly, this language, though diametrically opposed to the ideas expressed by the more democratic pamphlets, was practically identical. The differences were in his definitions and solutions. For Van der Hoop, representatives did not need to be directly elected or held closely responsible for following the nation's will. Nonetheless, he called on 'les Belges' and wrote easily of a 'nation' and its representatives in much the same way that his opponents had.

Other conservative rebuttals challenged d'Outrepont's 'Qu'allons-nous devenir?' directly. Two such pamphlets appeared undated in the spring of 1790. The first, published anonymously, called the democratic pamphlet 'absurde', and maintained that the 'Belges' needed nothing but to heed the instructions of their Estates-General and Congress.<sup>33</sup> Rather ironically, the anonymous author essentially advocated the same solution that d'Outrepont had: peace would come with unity. Again, though the ideas were entirely different, the language remained similar. 'Le Serment', the anonymous author wrote, 'the Oath legally sworn by the three Representative Orders of the people, forms within the State a harmony, a perfect union cemented by our Constitution in the most satisfactory manner for the people'.<sup>34</sup> Though he felt 'the Constitution must remain in its entirety, it is the foundation of the Oath, it is the font of our common happiness, it is the object for which the people have fought', which was the opposite of d'Outrepont's point, both pamphlets stressed the need for unity among the provinces and the 'Nation'.<sup>35</sup>

One of the Flemish Estates' pensionaries, Joseph De Baste, wrote the second pamphlet published in direct response to d'Outrepont's. Naturally, as one of their employees, De Baste strongly defended the position of the provincial Estates and wanted to see no change to their administration. Yet he also stressed the success of the new central government, praising the liberty it preserved. He extolled the political stability the 'Belges' had created in having 'established among our Provinces a Confederation strict &

solid, which, concentrat[ed] our forces in uniting our hearts, our aims & our riches'.<sup>36</sup> Essentially, De Baste used d'Outrepoint's goal against him. Where the *Conseil*'s lawyer had wanted to secure Belgian happiness through a new constitution created by a special national convention, De Baste pointed out that the provinces were already united and happy. Even without reform, De Baste wrote, 'Belgium, the age-old asylum of integrity, will never cease to conserve Union, true Liberty, & public Happiness'.<sup>37</sup> Just as Van der Hoop and 'Ce Que Nous Allons Devenir?' had, De Baste refuted democratic ideas but used the same vocabulary to make his point.

Indeed, all three of these conservative rebuttals illustrate the fact that writers subscribed to many different ideologies but ultimately agreed on one thing: there was a 'Belgique' which should be conserved through political union. The Flemish pensionary and the democratic Vandeveldel both invoked visions of a unified Belgium, strengthened through its unity. Van der Hoop, though he denied need for reform in the strongest of terms, clearly believed a Belgian people existed, as he described a happy Belgian republic. Even the anonymous author of 'Ce Que Nous Allons Devenir?' felt that the best way to govern the provinces was as a union, which required some kind of national structure and national consciousness.

## Conclusions

What all of these pamphlets show, regardless of their political allegiance, is a clear belief in the existence of a 'peuple Belge' and a 'Belgique'. There is no doubt that, in defending the newly independent United States of Belgium and arguing over who had the right to wield sovereignty, the various pamphlet writers invoked patriotic language. Caspar Hirschi writes that 'Patriotism is a language that uses a set of strong emotions ... all vague enough to be helpful for diverse purposes'.<sup>38</sup> Brecht Deseure reminds his readers that 'no single version of events is ever the same, and each version contains a certain degree of interpretation'.<sup>39</sup> Patriotic vagueness and varied interpretations of events are clearly illustrated in these Belgian pamphlets. All sides of the political spectrum invoked loyalty to the provinces, to the new United States of Belgium, and interpreted the success of the revolution to suit their own visions of a future government. What is more, they used their patriotism in just the way Hirschi goes on to describe it: 'To be effective, patriotism requires not much more than a clear sense of territory, understood as an inalienable collective property, and an idea of freedom attached to this territory, designating it as a sphere of complete self-determination'.<sup>40</sup> The

patriotism found in the pamphlets analysed above fits all these criteria. Moreover, it was used to fight for the political vision of a Belgian state comprised of a Belgian nation. This was similar to what happened in the French, Dutch and American revolutions. Annie Jourdan writes that over the course of the late-eighteenth-century rebellions, 'little by little the concept of homeland, but also the more unprecedented concept of nation, as a sovereign body and as a source of identity were established'.<sup>41</sup> In using their patriotic rhetoric as they did in the public sphere of pamphlet literature, the Belgian revolutionaries were crafting a Belgian national identity.

Over the course of the revolution, a national consciousness grew within the Belgian provinces. By mid-1790, it was contested but clearly existed and, at least at a political level, was beginning to supersede provincial partisanship. Olivier Damme has clearly shown that there were more pamphlets written throughout the revolutionary period that had a national focus than a provincial one; the pamphlets this article has considered show a similar trend. Even De Baste, an employee of the Flemish provincial Estates, who had a personal stake in the continued strength of the provincial administration, used clearly national language. Each of these pamphlets expresses elite concerns, primarily government structure and political construction, so that this is not, by itself, evidence of a wider, grassroots vision of national consciousness; but it is nonetheless a clear indication that a Belgian identity did exist and that these political elites harnessed it in trying to secure independence for the new state their revolution had made possible.<sup>42</sup> In looking at the French, Dutch and Americans, Jourdan asserts that, 'the revolutionaries of the eighteenth century progressively aspired to nothing more or less than creating [a national] community and thus "nationalizing" the people involved'.<sup>43</sup> In arguing over a national identity in the Belgian provinces, the revolutionaries were not so different from their counterparts in other places in the eighteenth-century European Atlantic world.

The eighteenth-century Belgian revolution is usually classified as a failure. By December 1790, due to infighting among the revolutionaries and the manoeuvrings of the other European powers, the Habsburg Empire, then led by Leopold II after Joseph's death, reclaimed the provinces. However, there is a success story to tell. The pamphlet debate about how to structure the new United States of Belgium's government provides the strongest evidence for the emergence of a national consciousness in the Belgian provinces at the end of the eighteenth century. That pamphlet writers argued about the Belgian state signifies its importance. That they all invoked the idea of a Belgian people or nation, and disputed what that meant, indicates that they believed one existed. As Lerner asserts, historians can use pamphlet



literature to understand 'the debates that contemporaries judged to be the most important as a means to enter into the mindset of the society under study'.<sup>44</sup> If it was important enough to spill ink about, it was a vital issue and thus it is clear that 'Belgianness', despite its ambiguity, was consequential to political writers and elites during the eighteenth-century revolution. After military victory against Imperial troops, the revolution's new battleground, and arguably its most important overall, was the ownership of the new Belgianness.

## Notes

1. 'Qu'avons-nous été? Que sommes-nous aujourd'hui?', in C.L. d'Outrepoint, 'Qu'allons-nous devenir? ou avis essentiel d'un Belge a ses concitoyens; Dans lequel on examine si quelqu'un, dans l'état actuel des choses, a le droit d'exercer l'autorité souveraine dans la Belgique, et où l'on indique ce qu'il faudroit faire pour y entretenir la paix et l'union, et faire le Bonheur de ces belles contrées' (1790), in *Belgica* vol. 2 [KU Leuven Maurits Sabbebibliothek], No. 2, 23 pages.
2. Also known as the Belgian Provinces or Austrian Netherlands and differentiated from their northern counterparts which then made up the United Provinces. The two most important, economically and politically, were Brabant (home to Brussels, Antwerp and the university at Leuven) and Flanders (home to Ghent). The other eight were Hainaut, Namur, Tournai and Tournesis, Malines (Mechelen), West Flanders, Gueldre, Limbourg and Luxembourg.
3. Piet Lenders, 'Vienne et Bruxelles: une tutelle qui n'exclut pas une large autonomie', in Harvé Hasquin (ed.), *La Belgique autrichienne 1713-1794: Les Pays-Bas méridionaux sous les Habsbourg d'Autriche* (Brussels: Crédit Communal, 1987), 37-70, at 38.
4. The only province to remain under Imperial rule was Luxembourg.
5. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1983); E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (1990; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; Revised ed., 2006); and John Breuilly, 'The Response to Napoleon and German Nationalism', in Alan Forrest and Peter H. Wilson (eds.), *The Bee and the Eagle: Napoleonic France and the End of the Holy Roman Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 256-83.
6. David A. Bell, 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being French: Law, Republicanism and National Identity at the End of the Old Regime', *American Historical Review* 106 (2001) 4, 1215-35, at 1216.
7. David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 6.



8. See Johannes Koll, "La Nation belge": Identité nationale entre Ancien Régime et modernité', in Claude Bruneel/Bruno Bernard (eds.), *Les prémices de l'identité belge avant 1830?* (Bruxelles: Archives générales du Royaume, 2006), 31-50; Johannes Koll, *Die belgische Nation: Patriotismus und Nationalbewußtsein in den Südlichen Niederlanden im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2003).
9. Brecht Deseure, *Onhoudbaar verleden: Geschiedenis als politiek instrument tijdens de Franse periode in België* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014).
10. Olivier Damme, 'Révolution brabançonne ou révolution belge? Une étude statistique des pamphlets de la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1787-1794)', in Claude Bruneel & Bruno Bernard (eds.), *Les prémices de l'identité belge avant 1830?* (Brussels: AGR, 2006), 51-80.
11. Though there is no definitive single-volume narrative history of the revolution, there are many works that treat it more or less comprehensively. One of the best factual accounts remains Henri Pirenne's seminal *Histoire de Belgique*, now in multiple editions published in Brussels between 1899 and 1932. A concise edition of the revolutionary episode was edited by Jeroom Vercruysse and published as Henri Pirenne and Jérôme Vercruysse, *Les Etats Belgiques Unis: Histoire de la révolution belge de 1789-1790* (Paris: Editions Duculot, 1992). Suzanne Tassier's *Les Démocrates belges de 1789* (Brussels: la Renaissance du livre, 1930) also remains immensely useful. More recent general works include Jan Craeybeckx, 'The Brabant Revolution: a Conservative Revolt in a Backward Country?', *Acta Historiae Neerlandica*, No. 9 (1970), 49-83 – an influential article, refuting many of Tassier's economic suppositions; Janet Polasky, *Revolution in Brussels, 1787-1793* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1985); and J. Roegiers and N.C.F. van Sas, 'Revolution in the North and South, 1780-1830', in J.C.H. Blom and E. Lamberts (eds.), *History of the Low Countries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., translated by James C. Kennedy (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), 275-318.
12. 'Lettre des Etats de Brabant adressée aux Etats des autres provinces' (le 11 Juillet 1787), in *Supplément aux Réclamations Belgiques, &c. Formant le XIIIe Tome de ce Recueil* (Brussels: L'imprimerie des Nations, 1789), [KU Leuven Main Library Tabularium], 177.
13. For excellent detail about the progression of the revolution and the motivation of these bourgeois revolutionaries, see Polasky, *Revolution in Brussels*, cited above.
14. See Jan C.A. De Clerck, *Jean-François Vonck (1743-1792)* (Brussels: Hayez, 1992), 91; Tassier, *Les Démocrates belges de 1789*, 96.
15. Polasky, *Revolution*, 90-3.
16. 'Acte d'Union proposé par les Etas de Flandre à ceux de Brabant', in *Les Réclamations Belgiques Couronnées par la Victoire & la Liberté, par le Triomphe de la Religion & des Loix, XV<sup>e</sup> volume de cette collection* (L'imprimerie des Nations, 1790), [KU Leuven Main Library Tabularium], A4961, 145.

17. Marc H. Lerner, *A Laboratory of Liberty: The Transformation of Political Culture in Republican Switzerland, 1750-1848*, Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and Roger Chickering (eds.), *Studies in Central European Histories* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 22.
18. In contrast to this rather simplistic binary model that has defined the historiography and, indeed, a large part of the contemporary commentary, Johannes Koll proposes dividing those in the provinces into 4 distinct groups: Conservatives (or Statists), Patriotic reformers (the Vonckists), Constitutional reformers, and Royalists. I find this refreshing and rather useful, but keep the binary model in this paper for simplicity and because my argument is that political affiliation did not actually matter when it came to using a national rhetoric. Johannes Koll, "La Nation belge": Identité nationale entre Ancien Régime et modernité, in Claude Bruneel & Bruno Bernard (eds.), *Les prémices de l'identité belge avant 1830?* (Brussels: AGR, 2006), 31-50, at 44-6.
19. Lerner, *Laboratory of Liberty*, 2.
20. Though only a few tracts are discussed here to conserve time and space, the ones I have chosen are indicative of the wider pamphlet literature. I have chosen to discuss d'Outrepoint's pamphlet because it elicited several responses. The other pamphlets were chosen for their succinct, clear illustration of the point. In my doctoral thesis, I have a broader discussion of these points, having analysed over 200 pamphlets closely. Jane Judge, 'Nation and State in the Belgian Revolution, 1787-1790', doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 2015.
21. D'Outrepoint, 'Qu'allons-nous devenir?', 8: 'pour donner à toutes les provinces belgiques une constitution qui les associe étroitement entr'elles, et établissent leur consistance politique'.
22. Ibid., 3.
23. Ibid., 22.
24. 'Décret du Conseil Souverain de Brabant, suivi sur la Requete du Conseiller & Procureur-Général de Brabant', in *Les Réclamations Belgiques Couronnées par la Victoire & la Liberté, par le Triomphe de la Religion & des Loix, XVIe. Volume de Cette Collection* (L'Imprimerie des Nations, 1790) [KU Leuven Tabularium], 247-8.
25. Annie Jourdan, 'The Netherlands in the constellation of the eighteenth-century Western revolutions', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 18/2 (2011), 199-225, at 214.
26. D'Outrepoint, 'Qu'allons-nous devenir?', 23: 'La souveraineté appartient à la nation. Celui qui en jouissoit autrefois en a perdu l'exercice, et cet exercice, la nation ne l'a confié à personne. C'est par un convention nationale qu'elle doit répartir les pouvoirs: empressons-nous à saisir le seul moyen qu'il y ait de rendre légitime l'exercice de l'autorité suprême'.
27. Ibid., 8: 'Il n'y a que l'union de toutes nos provinces, fondée sur l'unité de leur constitution, qui puisse être la protectrice efficace de notre liberté'.

28. 'Lettre d'un philanthrope, a [sic] l'auteur de l'ouvrage intitulé: qu'allons-nous devenir? ou avis essentiel d'un Belge à ses concitoyens'(2 January 1790) in *Varia sur la révolution brabançonne* [KU Leuven Maurits Sabbebiblioteek], No. 1, 18 pages, at 17 (emphasis original): 'rappeller [sic] aux Belges ... leur *majesté nationale*'.
29. Ibid. (emphasis original): 'Il est indispensable que Brabançons, Flamands, Hennuiers, Limbourgeois, Luxembourgeois, Tournaisiens, Gueldrois, Namurois, Malinois, ils se forment qu'un seul peuple, qu'une seule masse indivisible et nationale, *aussi-tôt qu'il aura été suffisamment pourvu à leur sûreté intérieure et extérieure*; et que l'intérêt devenu général, confonde, dans l'unité d'une constitution commune, les intérêts particuliers de toutes les provinces!'
30. Van Eupen to De Roode (22 December 1789), [Brussels, Royal Archives, 'Verenigde Nederlandse Staten/Etats Beligues Unis' 189, *Lettres du Chanoine Van Eupen, Secrétaire d'Etat des Etats Beligues-Unis au Chevalier de Roode, envoyé à Londres*] 22ff.: 'De Notre coté nous avons fait l'impossible pour convaincre [sic] Le Peuple que rien ne doit être changé chez Nous, que Marchant sur les traces de Nos Peres, traces consacrés par tant de siecles, [sic] nous nous mettrions à l'abri du danger de la jeune et inexperte nouveauté'.
31. H.J. Van der Hoop, 'Refutation des considérations impartiales et du projet d'adresse aux états avec une exposition du danger de ces brochures, Par H.J. Vander Hoop, Avocat du Peuple, au vrai citoyens'(Brussels, 1790) [KU Leuven Tabularium], 26 pages.
32. Ibid., 9 (emphasis original): 'Les Belges, loin de vivre sous un *Monarchie simple & limitée*, ont toujours & primitivement vecu [sic] en *Républiques*, ou qu'au moins, depuis qu'ils ont pris le Gouvernement mixte dont les differens [sic] historiens conviennent, ils ont conservé un *fond* républicain sous une *forme* monarchique'.
33. 'Ce Que Nous Allons Devenir? Des Belges unis & paisibles qui déposent toute leur confiance dans l'assemblée des Etats-unis, leurs Représentans [sic]', n.p., n.n., [KU Leuven Tabularium], 3 pages, at 3.
34. 'Ce Que Nous Allons Devenir?', 1: 'prêté légalement par les trois Ordres des Représentans [sic] du peuple, forme dans l'Etat une harmonie, une union parfaite cimentée sur notre Constitution de la maniere la plus satisfaisante pour le peuple'.
35. Ibid., 2: 'la Constitution doit rester dans son entier, voilà la base du Serment, voilà celui de notre bonheur commun, voilà l'objet pour lequel le peuple a combattu'.
36. M.J. De Baste, 'Apperçu sur le véritable état des provinces beligues, par un citoyen, en réponse a la brochure: qu'allons-nous devenir?' (Gand, l'Imprimerie de Bernard Poelman) in *Révolution Brabançonne*, vol. 2. [Ghent University Library], 3-32, at 4: 'établi entre nos Provinces un [sic] Confédération étroite & solide, qui, concentrant nos forces en réunissant nos coeurs, nos desseins & nos richesses'.

37. Ibid., 32: 'La Belgique, l'ancien azyle de la probité, ne cessera de conserver l'Union, la vraie Liberté, & la Félicité publique'.
38. Hirschi, *Origins of Nationalism*, 51.
39. Deseure, *Onhoudbaar verleden*, 14: 'Geen enkele weergave van een geheel aan gebeurtenissen is ooit dezelfde, en enkele versie bevat een bepaalde mate van interpretatie'.
40. Ibid.
41. Annie Jourdan, *La Révolution batave: entre la France et l'Amérique (1795-1806)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 32: 's'imposent peu à peu le concept de patrie, mais aussi celui plus inédit de nation, en tant qu'instance de souveraineté et en tant que source d'identité'.
42. The distinction between elite and popular national feeling is an idea taken from John Breuilly. It is succinctly described in his contribution to *The Bee and the Eagle*, cited above.
43. Jourdan, *La Révolution batave*, 11: 'ce à quoi aspirent progressivement les révolutionnaires du XVIIIe siècle, c'est ni plus ni moins à créer cette communauté et partant à 'nationaliser' les peuple impliqués'.
44. Lerner, *Laboratory of Liberty*, 22.



## 16 Singing the Nation

### Protest Songs and National Thought in the Netherlands during the Napoleonic Annexation (1810-1813)

*Bart Verheijen*

The study of protest songs has never played a major role in the historiography of the Napoleonic period in the Netherlands (1810-13). Until recently, the Napoleonic period, which ended the Dutch republic and introduced a modern monarchical and imperial system in Holland, has been interpreted as a period in which the Dutch population conformed itself to the Napoleonic reign.<sup>1</sup> Extensive research in the archives by Johan Joor showed the need for reconsideration of this image of absolute passivity and apathy among the Dutch population.<sup>2</sup> Lotte Jensen pointed to the need to include cultural sources in the study of protest against Napoleon.<sup>3</sup> However, resistance songs – which served as a popular way of expressing discontent and protesting against the Napoleonic regime – have not been fully integrated into historians' analyses. This is a pity, because police records show that, during the Napoleonic years, songs of a subversive and incendiary nature (*des chansons remplies d'expressions séditieuses*) were sung at many popular rallies and (spontaneous) protests. The French police took those songs very seriously and considered the composition and chanting of the songs as acts of resistance, thereby admitting that songs were a dangerous genre, directed against the stability of the Napoleonic regime.

In this article, I want to take a closer look at this singing culture during the Napoleonic years. I will limit myself to two specific subjects of turmoil in particular: conscription (or the draft) and the rumours that articulated the hope for the return of the house of Orange (and the restoration of Dutch sovereignty) in the last year of the annexation. My starting point is the assumption that songs were considered to have a big impact on society, based on their range and the significance of their content.<sup>4</sup> The songs, many of which lamented the current circumstances, referred to Dutch sovereignty, freedom and the house of Orange. Therefore, they were part of a larger discourse of revolt and resistance in which an oral tradition of sedition played an important role. This discourse of resistance was present throughout the whole Napoleonic period, and ideas of (national) identity were continuously being formed in reaction to Napoleonic politics. The songs sung during the period show a clear shift in content over time, thereby anticipating new events.

My second assumption is that the singing culture was very effective in dodging Napoleonic censorship laws. Therefore, this singing culture should be interpreted as being at the centre of the resistance against the Napoleonic institutions during the years 1810 to 1813. Copies of song texts were collected by the police, translated and sent to Paris to show the amplitude of the protest. The French police considered the songs dangerous to *l'esprit public*, the public spirit, and reacted vigorously to the chanting of songs.<sup>5</sup> The songs therefore can be seen as an important component of both oral and written resistance against the French annexation and Napoleonic imperial laws. A systematic analysis of Dutch reactions to the Napoleonic annexation, in which songs play a central role, can contribute to our understanding of popular resistance culture and public opinion during the years of French governance of the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup> It was against the horizon of Napoleonic occupation of the Netherlands that national thought could be articulated in this specific form.<sup>7</sup>

## Historical and Political Background

The revolutionary and Napoleonic period forms one of the most dynamic episodes in the early modern history of the Netherlands. The Batavian revolution and the Napoleonic occupation that followed (1795-1813) deeply influenced the political structure of the old, Dutch federal republic and set in motion a permanent transformation to the modern unitary state. As familiarity with the historical background and the political significance of events is necessary to comprehend the popular folk songs that were sung during the Napoleonic period, I will provide a short introduction.

The years of revolution and Napoleonic occupation brought about a fundamental rupture with pre-revolutionary Europe. The European constellation was shaken to its foundations.<sup>8</sup> The natural balance of power of the *ancien regime* was altered, first through the French Revolution and the revolutionary wars and later through the imperial Napoleonic wars. These events demanded a reorientation of identity.

In the Netherlands, the Batavian revolution and the constitution of 1798 created a unitary state. A new constitutional form could slowly emerge, but the contours of the revised cultural identities were still very vague. In the years after 1800 a new political consensus, in which the old quarrels from the revolutionary period were slowly forgotten, was created by a fresh, vigorous government, but the features of the accompanying national identity were still to be debated. However, the actions of Napoleon Bonaparte caused

this debate to take a different turn. In December 1804 Napoleon crowned himself emperor in the Notre Dame in Paris. The political and military powers of this 'new Caesar' were enormous. Dutch sovereignty would quickly be diminished in favour of the emperor's wishes. The Napoleonic influence however, ironically, contributed to the formation of a more consistent national identity. Expressions of love for the fatherland could be articulated using a discourse that developed a more fixed form because of the Napoleonic stranglehold. Here we note a paradox: at the moment the fatherland is threatened or ceases to exist it becomes omnipresent in ideas and words.<sup>9</sup> Against this background the work of songs, in uniting people against a common enemy, should be interpreted.<sup>10</sup>

From his *coup d'état* in 1799 onwards, Napoleon was interfering with Dutch national affairs. In 1806 he decided to appoint his younger brother Louis Napoleon (1778-1846) as monarch to the Dutch throne, a decision that formally ended the period of the Dutch republic. Although the Dutch were not very happy with this new Catholic prince, Louis Napoleon slowly earned the trust of most of the Dutch. He tried to learn the Dutch language, propagated a new national cultural policy (*cultuurpolitiek*) and secured a certain degree of Dutch sovereignty while Napoleonic soldiers dominated Europe. In 1810 the emperor was still unhappy with the role the Netherlands played in Europe, and he decided to incorporate Holland into his empire. From January 1811 the Napoleonic laws were implemented in the Netherlands, establishing a 'Napoleonic police state' including a rigid system of censorship and the notorious Napoleonic secret police.<sup>11</sup>

## Anti-French Protest Songs

The last few years have seen growing interest in the Napoleonic years in the Netherlands. This development has been further encouraged by the celebrations of 'Two hundred years of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1813-2013)'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, songs have remained out of sight as a valuable source for popular protest culture during the Napoleonic period. The French police archives contain more songs from the period 1810-13 than does the biggest Dutch national songs archive (*De liederenbank*).<sup>13</sup> This means that, to date, *De liederenbank* has managed to collect only a small fraction of the songs composed during this period.<sup>14</sup>

Although the songs form a tangible source for studying protest culture (because of the well-documented rigid censorship laws the Napoleonic police enforced in the Netherlands), it is impossible, for two principal reasons, to



pinpoint the exact number of protests in which songs played a prominent role. Firstly, oral articulations of anti-French feelings easily escaped the attention of the police. When the police did interfere, they often destroyed the songs that were printed, so that no written proof of their existence remains.<sup>15</sup> The second reason is that the Napoleonic archives are scattered and some were partly destroyed (as was the archive of Devilliers du Terrage, head of the police in the Netherlands, in November 1813). Nevertheless, a quick analysis of the archive of the police department in Paris (*Rapports du Directeur de la police de la Hollande*) and the archive of the censorship police (*Direction générale de l'imprimerie et de la Librairie*) revealed a dozen printed songs and another dozen handwritten protest songs. The content of the songs is almost the same as the popular printed pamphlets and (handwritten) broadsheets. Together with the different pamphlets that have been passed on and that survived the ill-treatment by the Napoleonic police, they make up the bulk of resistance literature during the Napoleonic times available to scholars.

A closer reading of the police records tells us more about the amplitude of the protest. Based on these police records, it can be argued that the singing culture was part of a broad resistance culture in which songs played an important role. The Napoleonic police subscribed to the belief that the act of singing of resistance songs could have a dramatic effect on the atmosphere. They acted accordingly, and people who sang rebellious songs on the streets were arrested. In April 1813 the citizen Jan van Tol, peat merchant and member of the night watch, was arrested after drumming the *Wilhelmus* and inciting his fellow citizens to revolt. Willem Ravesteyn, *porteur des tourbes* (peat carrier), was arrested just for showing up at a demonstration with his *tambour* (drum).<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Devilliers du Terrage was complaining to his superiors in Paris: 'we are being flooded by pamphlets'.<sup>17</sup> When we add up all the reports that the police filed about the expression (both written and oral) of seditious views, the number comes close to a hundred over a three-year period. This means that approximately once every ten days the police wrote an incident report about written or oral protest containing seditious resistance elements. Protests peaked at moments of agitation, such as the conscription rounds or rumours about imperial losses. The popularity of singing is again lucidly shown in November 1813, when the French armies withdrew from the Netherlands and the censorship laws were removed. During this month, a very great number of songbooks were published, in which the 'new freedom' was heralded and connected to the return of the house of Orange.

The range of the songs and texts that escaped French censorship could be quite substantial. The nation-wide circulation of a handwritten pamphlet in

1813, the *Katabasis. Rapport van Xerxes II aan den Senaat van mijn ongelukigen togt tegen de Scythen* by Cornelis van Marle, took only eight days.<sup>18</sup> These pamphlets were not confined to the major cities. Police reports state that pamphlets appeared 'everywhere, even in the small cities'.<sup>19</sup> The French were often surprised by the sudden eruptions of protest, both oral and in written works. The spontaneous and dynamic character of resistance acts made it quite difficult for the police to react. Devilliers du Terrage often complained that it was impossible to catch somebody red-handed (*saisir quelques unes en flagrant délit*).<sup>20</sup> Songs and pamphlets were distributed by taping texts to church doors in public places during the night or were passed on by hand.<sup>21</sup>

### Singing the Nation

Before discussing the resistance songs in the Netherlands in greater detail, it is necessary to say a few words about the singing culture in its proper cultural and historical context. The revolutionary and Napoleonic period (1780-1815) saw an explosion of political popular songs. The revolutionary French armies conquered Europe while marching to the drumbeat of the *Marseillaise*: 'Marchons! Marchons!'. Meanwhile in Paris, the nobility, aristocrats and clergy were strung up to the lantern posts while the revolutionary crowds sang: 'Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira, les aristocrates à la lanterne!' The Revolution brought about an unprecedented, popular patriotic mobilisation.<sup>22</sup> It can perhaps be argued that it was not the rhythm of the guillotine that opened the way to a new era; it was the love for the nation, bloodily expressed in the words of the *Marseillaise*. The French constructed a new nation based on songs that announced the end of the *ancien regime*.

The power of these songs also extended to the Netherlands.<sup>23</sup> Due to the rise of a new political culture, attempts were undertaken to mobilise the nation using different art forms.<sup>24</sup> The different political factions during the years of the anti-Orangist patriotic movements (1780-87) and the Batavian revolution (1795-1801) made use of music and songs to mobilise people for their political cause. In one of the few local studies conducted on this period, Joost Welten states that: 'we cannot deny the fact that the rural areas around 1800 were characterised by a rich singing culture'.<sup>25</sup> According to Welten, political sentiments were expressed through the singing of songs.<sup>26</sup>

It is no surprise that the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), whose works would later become a guidebook for the creation of national identities, already pointed to the importance of popular (*Volk*)

songs in constituting national identities and securing the social cohesion of the people. In 1778, he defined songs as: 'national treasures', in which the national character and voices of the people are best represented. For Herder, songs were the 'people's archives and the treasure chest of their ancestors' accomplishments'. He thus connected the universal power of *Volkslieder* (folk songs) to specific cultures.<sup>27</sup> The popular songs would play an important role in the creation of national identities (for instance, through national anthems).<sup>28</sup> Herder published his collection of *Volkslieder* in 1778-79, thereby providing a first, non-political step preceding the modern nationalistic movements.<sup>29</sup>

It is all too tempting to see the revolutionary era as the forerunner of the modern nationalistic movements that constituted nation-state formation processes in the nineteenth century. Songs and melodies, which later would be adopted as national anthems, were sung constantly throughout the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, thereby serving as unofficial national anthems in the first years of the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> This is especially true for the folk songs that later would become the national anthems of France, Great Britain and the Netherlands: the *Marseillaise*, *God Save the Queen/King* and the *Wilhelmus*. Although these songs hadn't been formally adopted, the narratives of national thought, struggles and rivalry with other nations, serve as 'unofficial national anthems' and have the same constitutive power of inclusion and exclusion that would later be a key characteristic of the national anthems in the nineteenth century.

More specifically, there are two elements of national identity which converge in these songs: the idea of a *nation*, *patrie* or *vaderland* (fatherland), which is attributed to people who share the same qualities and, maybe even more importantly, share the same history. Secondly, the idea of the existence of a defined territory in which identities can be distinguished. National sovereignty thus becomes a crucial consideration.<sup>31</sup> The meaning of songs during the Napoleonic age was twofold. Firstly, they described the perilous position in which the fatherland had placed itself, and at the same time, referred to the glorious past while articulating the hope of a renewed future. Secondly, songs *actively* invited citizens to participate in celebration or resistance acts, thereby connecting their faith with that of the nation. Cultural manifestations of national thought, therefore, cannot be interpreted in a historical vacuum or as an epiphenomenon of the political reality, but should be regarded as part of the construction of national thought and the formation of political ideals.

Songs also have a more practical power: they can easily be distributed and have a relatively broad range. They can be printed or handwritten and

passed along from person to person. Songs have a firm root in popular culture and therefore supported the popular struggle against the Napoleonic influence.<sup>32</sup> Songs are sung to older, well-known folk melodies that widen their range. The fact that the melody also spreads a message (like the *Wilhelmus* or the *Marseillaise*) makes it a very valuable means to articulate alliances and stereotypes of enemies.<sup>33</sup> To give an example: in Dordrecht, on the celebration of the 'Napoleon day' (15 August 1811), the first time this day was officially celebrated in the Netherlands, a group of musicians played *God save the King* in the streets.<sup>34</sup> Because of the decade-long war Napoleon was fighting with the English, the performance of this well-known English folk song can be interpreted only as a protest against French influence in the Netherlands.

### Songs against Napoleonic Conscription

Conscription was the most important subject of protest and turmoil in the years of Napoleonic annexation. Its enactment had a big effect on society. Historians estimate that conscriptions in Holland called around 30,000 Dutch youth to arms. There were two big conscription rounds: one that lasted from the autumn of 1811 to the beginning of 1812, when Napoleon was preparing his Russian campaign, and one in the spring of 1813 when he needed men to compensate for the losses suffered in the Russian war.<sup>35</sup> The discontent with this practice was articulated in different waves of anti-Napoleonic publications: printed and unprinted songs and anonymous pamphlets. As argued before, the circulation of the single-sheet songs, printed or handwritten, was very effective. Although, the resistance against conscription was not nationally coordinated, it peaked whenever a new conscription round was announced.

The corpus of songs I will present here played a central role in the oral distribution of resistance against conscription. Devilliers du Terrage writes that this particular song was sung: 'all night long, in all the streets of Amsterdam on 25 March 1811'.<sup>36</sup>

Couplet: 'on Julia's tune'

Oh what has happened to us,  
That we in our youth  
Had to serve voluntarily  
For the fatherland.

In the distance I see something approaching.  
 It is death that comes closer.  
 Singing and crying will make no difference.  
 It is for the imperial crown.  
 It is for the Emperor Napoleon.  
 In the dark grave  
 I will bow for him.  
 Oh pale dead, please release me!  
 I rather want to fight myself free  
 Than to die in such slavery!<sup>37</sup>

The last lines of this song can be interpreted as a call for action. This becomes even more plausible when we interpret these songs in a broader discourse of anonymous pamphlets and poems, as the French authorities did. These pamphlets express the need for the Dutch to pick up their weapons and fight against French tyranny.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, the songs were part of a written (if they were published) *and* an oral tradition. The songs could be sung during a public manifestation like the conscription revolts in the Netherlands. Although the conscription revolts did not have a national character, the content of the songs could very well contribute to bridging the gap between local interests and a more national identity (especially during the last year of the Napoleonic occupation). This claim, based on the analysis of the archives of the Napoleonic police and justice department, is supported by some of the material found in local archives. Joost Welten states, in reference to the protest songs he found, that the songs were used to call on the people to fight against French occupation. In these songs references are made to the whole territory of the Netherlands (*gans Nederland*). The French annexation forced the opponents of this system to respond to the French 'by constructing an awakening nationalism'.<sup>39</sup> Against the Napoleonic system the people did not respond with local claims and regionalism but by calling on feelings of national sentiment. The need to free the fatherland from the foreign occupier was in a paradoxical manner closely linked to the message of the French Revolution (as formulated in the *Marseillaise*). In a way, the resistance against conscription brought forth the idea of the need of a Dutch armed uprising or, to go even further, 'a national army'.<sup>40</sup>

Anti-conscription songs all follow a similar pattern: the sureness of death was present in all songs protesting conscription. Once incorporated into the Napoleonic armies a soldier's chances of a safe return home were considered close to zero. The losses during the Russian campaign were tremendous. Out of the 500,000 to 600,000 soldiers of the Grande Armée that Napoleon

led into the Russian winter, at least 400,000 were killed.<sup>41</sup> This feeling of almost certain doom is present in the next song: 'The sad goodbye of a Requisitionair/ conscripted soldier to his lover'. The first lines read:

Goodbye my love. I have to leave you.  
 Cry for me because this will be my end.  
 It is my destiny, lamenting won't change a thing.  
 It is for the country that I must fight.  
 Please stop your crying; it is the law.  
 We will rather fight to be free, than embrace this slavery.<sup>42</sup>

Seditious elements could also be found at other levels of society. In addition to the turmoil and the conscription riots, religious sermons were also considered as acts of resistance. The best-documented example of such a reaction was provoked by a Roman Catholic sermon that was printed and circulated through different bookshops, stating that: 'we should pray for the conscripts and their families and loved ones'. On 3 January 1813, the French police removed it from the stores.<sup>43</sup>

The same lamenting tone regarding the position of young men can be found in this third conscription song, of which a few lines are given below:

Melody: 'The situation is very bad' ('t is thans slecht gesteld')

Please people hear this song  
 To know what is happening in Holland  
 And everybody is lamenting it.  
 O disaster, o disaster  
 I wish we could have peace!<sup>44</sup>

All conscription rounds show the same increase in written and oral resistance material. The hope of an end to war and 'slavery' (meaning conscription) form the most important elements. These songs are rooted in a pamphlet culture in which, in addition to the lamentation of the young men, hatred against Napoleon was expressed. Pamphlets mostly called him a tyrant, but also a devil or a monster:

Damn you, Napoleon,  
 bloody tyrant of Dutch youth,  
 Beelzelbub, child of Satan.<sup>45</sup>

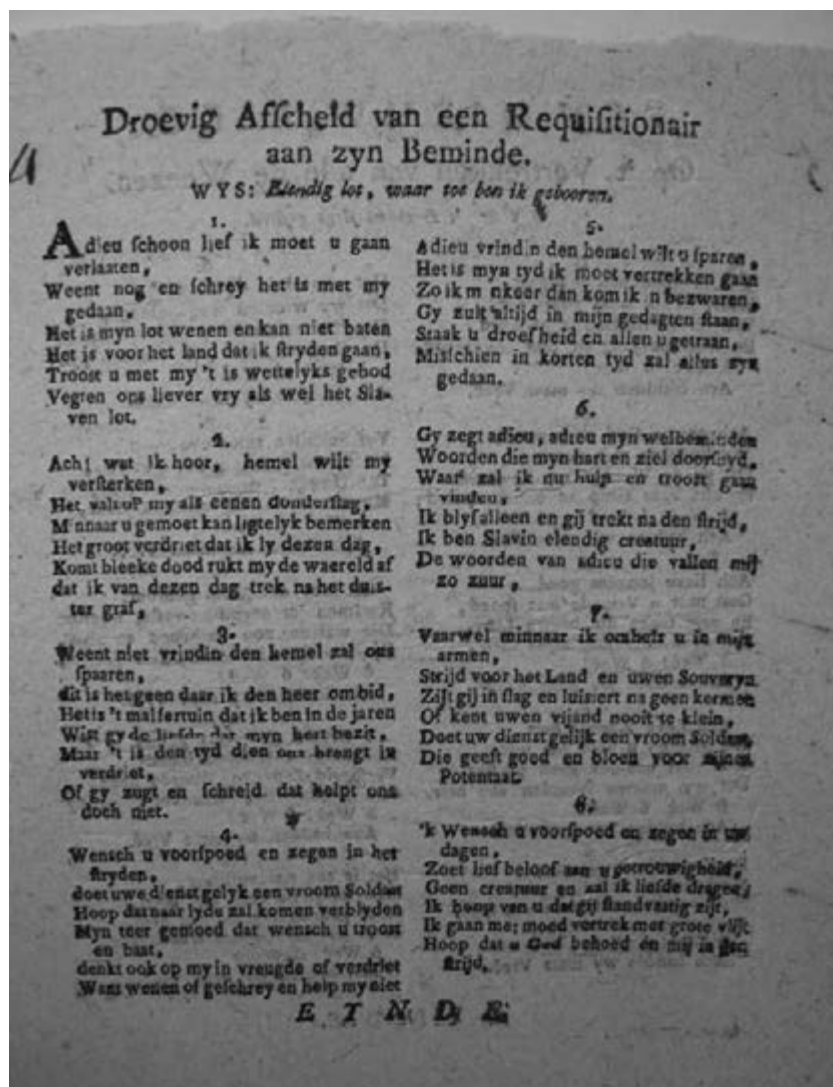


Figure 16.1 Anti-conscription song, spring 1811. Archives Nationales (AN), F/7/3489, Police des livres imprimés (1810-14), March 1811.

The most noteworthy element of the resistance discourse that is missing in the conscription songs released before 1813 is the articulated idea of a future sovereign fatherland. The contours of the Dutch nation free of Napoleonic laws are not yet present. In other words, the wish for an end to Napoleonic laws is present, but a new frame in which Dutch sovereignty could be imagined is still latent. This is most clearly illustrated by the absence of



the house of Orange as an alternative to the Napoleonic occupation. After the winter of 1812, however, this new alternative to Napoleonic rule will quickly become the central element in all songs.<sup>46</sup>

Songs were also sung during the actual conscription riots. The riots in The Hague in April 1813 are very well documented. During the conscription riots in that spring of 1813 a large crowd gathered in front of the city hall. Some protesters were armed with rifles. The crowd shouted 'Vive Orange!' and sang songs about the Prince of Orange, followed by the old Orangist folksong the *Wilhelmus*.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the spring of 1813 the same kind of manifestations took place in other cities. The course of events followed a familiar pattern: the people tried to enter the administrative building in an attempt to destroy the conscription lists, while singing resistance songs.<sup>48</sup> According to the French police, one line was particularly popular: '*Notre prince est petit, mais il deviendra grand*' ('Our prince is young, but he will grow up soon').<sup>49</sup>

### 'Vive Orange'

Although there had been reported signs of recurring revivals of 'Orangism' during the revolutionary period as well as during the Napoleonic occupation (examples are the peace of Amiens in 1802 and the invasion by British troops of Walcheren in 1809), it was not until the winter of 1812 that Orangism lost its *political* connotation and began to function as a *national* symbol again. The most important reason for the return of national categories of Orangism was the failure of Napoleon's Russian campaign. As soon as the news about Napoleon's retreat from Russia and the losses he suffered was made public the idea of a post-Napoleonic age could be articulated. Napoleon lost his aura of invincibility, as can be seen in the different songs and pamphlets that were written in the spring of 1813, when Napoleon's Grande Armée was destroyed by the Russian winter and the end of the Napoleonic reign became imaginable. On 15 January 1813, Devilliers du Terrage wrote to Paris: '*Les souvenirs de la maison d'Orange se sont réveillés dans les coeurs de la populace*' ('The memories of the house of Orange are awakening in the hearts of the people').<sup>50</sup> From then on, the number of pamphlets increased massively. Police reported that 'every night new *affiches* are appearing, throughout the department Bouche de la Meuse' (in Rotterdam, Delft, Dordrecht and The Hague).<sup>51</sup>

As a result of the loss of troops during the Russian campaign, Napoleon launched a new conscription round. This time the sons of the Dutch elite



were included in the draft. Rich families had been used to buying their way out of conscription, but in the spring of 1813 Napoleon needed every man. This conscription round led to a fresh outburst of protest.<sup>52</sup> There are many records of conscripted soldiers shouting 'vive Orange'. Pamphlets were published calling on Dutchmen to 'spill our blood for the glory of Orange-Nassau'.<sup>53</sup> However, all these actions still took place under the strict control of the French police. They acted vigorously in the spring of 1813 during the 'uprising of April 1813'. There are many reports of revolt during this month in the departments of the *Monden van de Maas* and *Zuyderzee* (North Holland, South Holland and Utrecht). The French did not hesitate to act. Various leaders of the revolt were executed by the Napoleonic troops.<sup>54</sup>

It was not until November 1813, when the French armies withdrew from Holland and the censorship laws were no longer enforced, that most songs could be published. There was an explosion of Orangist literature. I did not find any pamphlet or song without references to the house of Orange. It can be argued that 'Orange' became a substitute for 'freedom and sovereignty'.<sup>55</sup> Although many of these songs were written as occasional songs, the elements are more or less the same as those we find in the songs and pamphlets that were written before November 1813: Orange is the liberator of Holland; Napoleon is a tyrant who now has fallen; This French devil and brute attempted to subjugate our country; Now that he has failed, he has to run with his villains to find shelter; Now that Holland is free again, we will see prosperity.

The *Wilhelmus*, the song that functioned as a resistance song (*Geuzenlied*) during the Eighty Years' War against the Spanish (1568-1648), was the most important melody that was used. The song text could be altered in many ways, as this example from November 1813 shows:

Wilhelmus of Nassouwen,  
Remains our song of joy!  
The God in which we placed our trust  
Will not leave Holland.  
The blood of our fathers  
Has not turned 'French' inside us.  
It runs through our veins  
Where it shines Orange!<sup>56</sup>

As in the song cited above, which states that the blood of our forefathers remained 'Orange' and had not turned into 'French blood', the other versions of the *Wilhelmus* also underlined the continuity between William of Orange

and the hereditary prince, William Frederick (who would later be crowned King William I in 1815). The songs fitted the circumstances of 1813 perfectly; during the Napoleonic occupation the comparison between the Dutch freedom struggle against the Spanish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the resistance to the Napoleonic annexation was made many times. The *Wilhelmus* consequently appealed to continuity between the house of Orange and the history and future of the Netherlands.

In the following version this continuity is clearly shown:

It was William of Orange  
Who founded the Dutch state.  
He broke the yoke of Spain,  
Feared throughout the East and the West.<sup>57</sup>

These words are connected to the fight against the Napoleonic armies: 'It was William of Orange who defeated the French'. The song calls for action against the tyrannical scourge, to end all party quarrels and to unite under God and the Dutch flag and is therefore illustrative of the discourse of Orangism in November 1813.

In another song this loyalty to the house of Orange is seen as the way the Dutch could gain their freedom through fighting:

Keep following in your loyal fathers' glorious footsteps,  
Orange will lead you, loyal heroes.  
The French pride is mortified  
While glory triumphs  
Through loyalty, loyalty, loyalty!<sup>58</sup>

Sung to the melody of '*al is ons prinsje nog zo klein*', a famous old Orangist folksong<sup>59</sup> ('Our prince is young, but he will grow up soon') that had been sung in April 1813 during the conscription turmoil, it serves as an unofficial anthem, just like the *Wilhelmus*, in which the end of the Napoleonic occupation is linked to a new Dutch future under the leadership of the house of Orange. In other versions of the *Wilhelmus* this new future is connected to the Batavian myth (the first inhabitants of the Low Countries) and to the history of freedom and sovereignty of the Netherlands. In this way, different elements are combined in a revitalised sense of Dutch nationhood.<sup>60</sup> These songs provide us with insight into how renewed identity formation was articulated after the Napoleonic armies left Holland. These identity processes are rooted in the nationalisation and depoliticisation of the colour

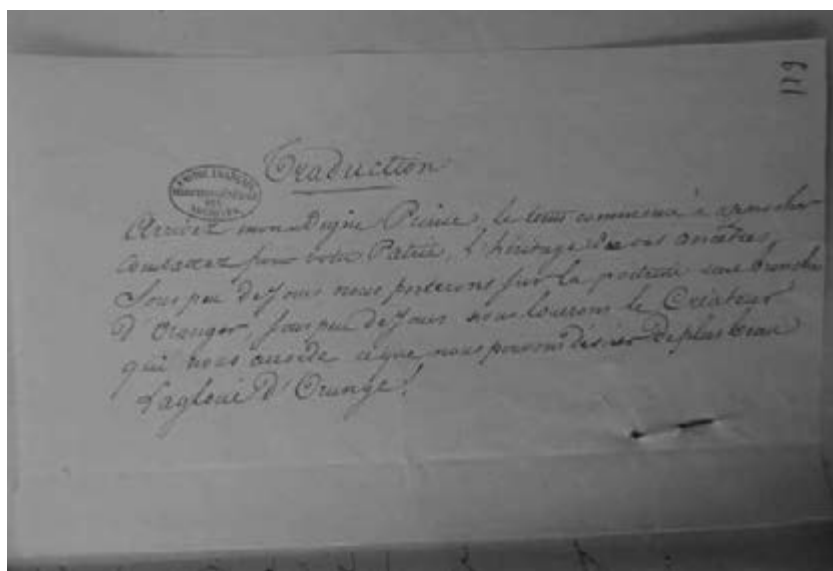


Figure 16.2 Orangist pamphlet, which circulated in March 1813, when many Orangist songs were sung to celebrate the birthday of the hereditary prince William Frederick. Archives Nationales (AN), F/7/3064, Rapports du directeur de la police en Hollande, Paul-Etienne Devilliers du Terrage (1811-13), 25 March 1813.

Orange that can be traced back to the winter and early spring of 1813, when the Napoleonic eagle fell off its invincible pedestal.

## Conclusion

Protest songs form a valuable and tangible source for the study of public opinion, discontent, and the resistance culture during the Napoleonic annexation of the Netherlands, between 1810 and 1813. The incendiary nature of most of the published songs, and the fierce reaction by the Napoleonic police indicate that these songs played an important role in the popular resistance culture against the Napoleonic soldiers and the imperial system. Songs proved to be very effective in dodging French censorship laws, and therefore their content should be interpreted as being at the centre of identity formation processes during the Napoleonic period in the Netherlands. As such, the study of resistance songs, which are rooted in a broader pamphlet culture, will further contribute to the replacement in Dutch historiography of the idea of general apathy among the Dutch population during the Napoleonic years with a picture of an era of popular protest and political turmoil. This

interpretation has gained traction since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In this article I have argued that the two most important discourses opposing Napoleonic annexation are protest songs against conscription and the outburst of Orangism 'in the hearts and minds of the Dutch people'. These discourses do not appear simultaneously, but sequentially, revealing a certain development in the attempts to construct a renewed Dutch identity. Therefore, the diverse nature of these songs can be considered as both a representation and a catalyst of the identity-forming processes. An anti-French discourse that is a reaction to Napoleonic imperial laws (conscription) and Napoleonic dictatorship is followed by a discourse that articulates a hope for the return of the house of Orange (which was expressed more loudly from the spring of 1813). It was a singing culture, in other words, that contributed to the construction of the image of the enemy and the construction of a renewed and sovereign fatherland.

## Notes

1. This omission in the historiography can be attributed to Herman Colenbrander whose archival study *Gedenkstukken* (1905-22), in which he points to the apathy of the Dutch population, has resonated throughout twentieth-century historiography of the Napoleonic period in the Netherlands. See: Johan Joor, *De adelaar en het lam. Onrust, opruiming en onwilligheid in Nederland ten tijde van het koninkrijk Holland en de Inlijving bij het Franse keizerrijk (1806-1813)* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2000), 39-40; Lotte Jensen, *Verzet tegen Napoleon* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2013), 21.
2. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 677-94.
3. Lotte Jensen, 'The Dutch against Napoleon. Resistance literature and national identity, 1806-1813', *Journal of Dutch Literature* 2 (2011), 5-26.
4. In early modern times songs could play a similar, important role in the Low Countries, see for example: Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn, Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Literary cultures and public opinion in the Low Countries, 1450-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); M. de Bruin, 'Het Wilhelmus tijdens de Republiek', in Louis Peter Grijp (ed.), *Nationale hymnen. Het Wilhelmus en zijn burens* (Nijmegen 1998). Speciaal nummer van: *Volkskundig bulletin* 24 (1998), 23.
5. Herman T. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken der algemeene geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1905-22), dl. 6, band 3, GS 17, 1001, 1631. Also available online at ING (Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis) at [www.inghist.nl/retroboeken/gedenkstukken](http://www.inghist.nl/retroboeken/gedenkstukken); Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 355.

6. Although I limit myself to two major subjects in this article due to practical reasons, in my PhD research I will attempt to present a systematic analysis of the singing culture throughout the whole French period (1806-13). For more information, see: [www.proudtobedutch.org/](http://www.proudtobedutch.org/).
7. I follow Joep Leerssen's definition of 'national thought': 'a way of seeing human society primarily as 'consisting of discrete, different nations, each with an obvious right to exist and command loyalty, each characterized and set apart unambiguously by its own separate identity and culture'. Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 15.
8. Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present. Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences de temps* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2003).
9. Jensen, 'The Dutch against Napoleon', 6.
10. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 355.
11. Arend H. Huussen, Jr., 'Freedom of the press and censorship in the Netherlands 1780-1810', in A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse (eds.), *Too mighty to be free. Censorship and the press in Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1987), 107-26, at 122.
12. Despite a burst of scholarship over the last decade, in 2009 both Matthijs Lok and Johan Joor stated that the Napoleonic years still deserve more attention from historians. See: Matthijs Lok, *Windvanen. Napoleontische bestuurders in de Nederlandse en Franse Restauratie (1813-1820)* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2009), 41; Johan Joor, "'A very Rebellious Disposition": Dutch Experience and Popular Protest under the Napoleonic Regime (1806-1813)', in A. Forrest, K. Hagemann & J. Rendall (eds.), *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians. Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820. War, Culture and Society, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 181-204, at 182.
13. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 355. Johan Joor, who has written extensively about the turmoil and resistance against the Napoleonic occupation, does not include the content of these songs in his analysis. In his 900-page work only one page is reserved for an analysis of resistance songs. He states that most texts have not been passed down. Joost Welten writes: 'The number of studies which present a systematic analysis of a singing culture within its proper historical and cultural context are very few in number'. Joost Welten, *Bijlagen*, 150. Welten refers to: Stefaan Top (ed.), *Komt vrienden, luistert naar mijn lied. Aspecten van de marktanger in Vlaanderen (1750-1950)* (Tielt, Weesp: Lannoo, 1985).
14. See: [www.liederenbank.nl](http://www.liederenbank.nl). The *liederenbank* contains almost 170,000 songs, but only a few date from the period 1806-13.
15. This is also the conclusion of Joost Welten, who has written a study on the impact of the Napoleonic annexation on a local community. Joost Welten,

- In dienst voor Napoleons Europese droom. de verstoring van de plattelandssamenleving in Weert* (Leuven: Davidfonds, 2007), 143.
16. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, dl. 6, band 3, GS 17, p. 1631.
  17. Archives Nationales (AN) F/7/3064 *Rapports du Directeur de la Police de La Hollande 1811-1814*, Letter of Devilliers to Comte Réal, 3 February 1813. Pierre-François Comte Réal was the most important servant of the minister of police, Savary de Rovigo.
  18. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 530; Johanna Naber, *Geschiedenis van Nederland, tijdens de inlijving bij Frankrijk, juli 1810 -november 1813* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 1905), 243; Lotte Jensen, 'Cornelius van Marle over Napoleons veldtocht naar Rusland', *Het Bilderdijk-Museum* (2012), 9-18.
  19. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, dl. 6, band 1, GS 13 p. 444. De Celles to Montalivet, 7 February 1813.
  20. AN, F/7/3064/ letter of Devilliers to Savary de Rovigo, 2 January 1813; National Archives of the Netherlands (NA), 2.01.10.04 Ministry of Justice and Police, inv. Nr. 275 (9 oogstmaand 1809).
  21. Naber, *Geschiedenis van Nederland*, 242; Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 530.
  22. David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France. Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8-9.
  23. Henk te Velde and Donald Haks (eds.), *Oranje onder: populair orangisme van Willem van Oranje tot nu* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, Bert Bakker, 2014) 15-6.
  24. Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, 'Hef aan Bataaf!' Nederlandse muziek rond 1795 (2 cd's)', in P. van Reijen (ed.), *Hef aan! Bataaf! Beschouwingen over muziek en muziekleven in Nederland omstreeks 1795* (Rotterdam: Erasmus Muziek Producties, 1997), 8.
  25. Welten, *In dienst voor Napoleons Europese droom*, 141.
  26. *Ibid.*, 143.
  27. See: Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'National identities: a transnational paradigm', in A. Dieckhoff and C. Jaffreot (eds.) *Revisiting Nationalism. Theories and Processes* (London: Hurst & Co., 2005) 127; Karl Menges, 'Particular Universals: Herder on national literature, popular literature and world literature', in H. Adler and W. Köpke (eds.), *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder* (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), 201; Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 42.
  28. Thiesse, *National identities*, 129.
  29. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). This collection of songs is characterised by Hroch as a non-political first step in nationalist movements. He calls this 'phase A nationalism'.
  30. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism*, 157.
  31. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*, 7.

32. Most historians agree that the resistance against Napoleon was a popular struggle. The songs can be evidence for this claim: 'It was a popular struggle. Uniting every level of society, but it was about preserving the past, a past in which the "nation-state" had no part'. Michael Broers, *Europe under Napoleon, 1799-1815* (London: Hodder Arnold Publication, 1996) 270; Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 690. However, Joor and Broers draw this conclusion without looking at the content of pamphlets and songs that were published. Most of these songs and pamphlets had a *national* message and the significance of these messages should be examined in greater detail.
33. Grijp, *Het Wilhelmus en zijn burens. Nationale hymnen*.
34. Johan Joor, 'Contestation et image anti-napoléonienne en Hollande au cours de la période napoléonienne (1806-1813)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 369 (2012) 35.
35. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 327-39.
36. AN, F/7/3489/ letter Devilliers to Savary, 25 March 1811.
37. 'Ach wat is ons overkomen/ dat wij in onze jonge jeugd/Vrijwillig onder dienst ben gekomen/ dat wij moesten aan alle kant/ Vrijwillig dienen voor het Vaderland/ Wat zie ik daar gints, wat zie ik voor mijn naderen/ Ik zie de dood voor mijn ogen staan/ zingen en wenen kan ons niet baten/ 't Is tog maar voor deze Kroon/ 't is voor de Keizer Napoleon/ het duistere Graf/ Zal ik voor hem nederbuigen/ o bleeke dood! mijn uit de nood/ Ik vegt mijn liever vrij/ Als te leven in zoo'n slavernij'.
38. The French archive contains a couple of dozen of these – handwritten and printed – pamphlets. AN, F/7/3489 and AN/F7/3064.
39. 'De Franse overheersing noopte de tegenstanders van dat bewind met andere woorden om een beginnend nationalisme te ontwikkelen'. See: Welten, *In dienst voor Napoleons Europese droom*, 145.
40. *Ibid.*, 145.
41. Adam Zamoyski, 1812. *Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004), 537-40. Because of the chaos of the retreat from Russia, debate still rages about the number of soldiers who returned. Estimations range from 20,000 to 100,000 survivors.
42. AN, F/7/ 3489: 'Adieu Schoon lief, ik moet u gaan verlaten/ Weent nog en schrey het is met mij gedaan/ Het is mijn lot wenen en kan niet baten/ Het is voor het land dat ik stryden gaan/ Troost u met 't is wettelyks gebod/ Vegten ons liever vry als wel het Slavenlot'.
43. AN, F/7/ 3489, 3 January 1813. It was sold by C.L Schleger and J.J. Thompson in Rotterdam and printed in Amsterdam by A. Breemen.
44. AN, F/7/ 3489: 'Ach mensen al tegaar/ Hoort na dit Lied voorwaar/ Wat ér in Holland is gebeurd/En waar nu jong en oud om treurd/ O Wee! O Wee!/ Ach hadden wij maar Vree'.
45. AN, F/7/3064. The pamphlet is not dated by the French police. 'Vervloekt!/ Bloedbeul van Neerlands heldenjeugd/ Beelzelbub en Satans hellevreugd'.



46. Bart Verheijen, 'Beef dwingeland! Verzet tegen de conscriptie tijdens de Napoleontische bezetting 1810-1813', in Lotte Jensen and Nina Geerdink (eds.), *Oorlogsliteratuur in de vroegmoderne tijd. Vorm, identiteit en herinnering* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013), 119-32, at 129-31.
47. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, dl. 6, band 3, GS 17, p. 1631.
48. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 210.
49. Archives Nationales (AN) F/7/3064 *Rapports de Directeur de la Police de La Hollande 1811-1814*. Letter Devilliers du Terrage, 3-3-1813; AN, AFIV/ 1725, or: Colenbrander dl. 6, band 1, GS 13, p. 267.
50. Ibid., 503; AN, F/7/ 8374. AN, F/7/ 7014 ('copy for Savary').
51. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, dl. 6, band 1, GS 13, p. 549; Ibid., GS 16, 372.
52. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, chapters 8 and 12.
53. AN, F/7/3064/ 'Pamphlet found in the night of 1-2 February 1813 in The Hague'.
54. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 350.
55. To name a few: Johannes van der Palm, *Geschied- en redekunstig gedenkschrift van Nederlands herstelling in den jare 1813* (Schiedam: H.A. Roelants, 1813); Abraham Lastdrager, *Gedenkstuk der verlossing en herstelling van Nederland, in den jare 1813* (2 vols.). Some of the examples of songbooks that were published in the October of 1813 include: *De vrolijke Nederlander. Zingende en Spelende de Aangenaamste Liederen, die hedendaags Gezongen worden* (Amsterdam: B. Koene, c. 1814), see: [www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_vro013vrolo1\\_01/](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_vro013vrolo1_01/) and *Oranje's vaderlandsch Liedboek* (Rotterdam: N. Cornei, 1813).
56. *Nieuw liedenboekje, op aangename en bekende wijzen: strekkende tot opwekking van vaderlandschen moed en gepaste vreugde in deze belangrijke dagen (november 1813)*. 'Wilhelmus van Nassouwen/ Is nog ons vreugdelied!/ De God van ons betrouwen/ Verlaat ons Holland niet/ Het bloed van onze vaderen/ Is niet in ons verfranscht/ Het huppelt door onze aderen/ Waar 't blijd Oranje glanst'.
57. 'Door Willem van Oranje/ Is Holland staat gevest/ Hij brak het juk van Spanje/ Geducht door Oost en West'.
58. 'Volg steeds der vaderen roemrijk spoor en trouw/ Oranje gaat u, Helden! Voor in trouw!/ Der Franschen hoogmoed is verneerd/ Terwijl roemrijk triomfeert/ Door trouw! Door trouw! Door trouw!'
59. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam*, 355.
60. Elements of an old Orangist discourse are combined with fresh elements to fit the new events. For older uses of Orangism and the Batavian myth in the construction of Dutch identities see: Lotte Jensen, "'Toen 't volk als uit één' mond, lang leve Oranje! Riep". Orangisme in het vredesjaar 1748', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 128 (2015), 1-22.





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